



Daily Report

Wednesday, 24 February 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 February 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:40 P.M., 24 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Domestic Abuse

Ellie Reeves:

[\[154649\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the interim charging protocol introduced in March 2020 for cases relating to domestic violence, (a) when it will cease to operate and (b) what assessment has been made of the efficiency of the protocol.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service ('CPS') and the National Police Chiefs' Council ('NPCC') introduced an interim charging protocol in response to the Coronavirus pandemic on 1 April 2020 to identify and prioritise the highest risk cases. This includes those that involve domestic abuse.

The Charging Board, chaired jointly by the CPS and the NPCC, oversees and monitors arrangements for charging at a national level, including the interim charging protocol. Local police forces and CPS Areas (including CPS Direct that covers charging outside usual working hours) monitor local arrangements for charging through local Prosecution Team Performance Management meetings.

The interim charging protocol continues to operate and is the subject of ongoing discussion between the CPS and the police. No end date has been set.

■ Prosecutions: Fraud

Darren Henry:

[\[154564\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the CPS in prosecuting fraud cases.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service ('CPS') continues to work with the police and other investigators to prosecute criminal cases involving fraud.

In 2019-20, the CPS prosecuted over 10,000 defendants where Fraud and Forgery was the principal offence.

The CPS has a dedicated, Specialist Fraud Division to ensure they devote the right skills and resources to prosecuting complex and serious fraud and economic crime. Their work ranges from prosecution of bankers and investment scams to prosecuting those who seek to defraud the taxpayer of millions of pounds.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **Biofuels****Colum Eastwood:**[\[155467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department's Biomass Supply Feedstock Innovation Programme applies to farmers and processors throughout the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Our programme targets biomass feedstock innovations that will increase the production of sustainable domestic biomass. We will have £4 million of funding available for our feasibility stage and anticipate launching in March 2021. This will support suppliers from right across the UK, including Northern Ireland, to develop project proposals that will deliver innovations in biomass production.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination****Chi Onwurah:**[\[155032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the contract with AstraZeneca for at cost vaccine for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic, how the end of the pandemic is defined.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The World Health Organisation declared a coronavirus pandemic on 11 March 2020 and we would expect it in due course to declare a move to a post-pandemic period, as it has done previously for the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2010.

■ **Electronic Commerce: Safety****Ben Lake:**[\[155319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timescale is for publication of the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) new voluntary commitment for online marketplaces; and what plans the OPSS has for protection of consumers using online marketplaces not signing up to the voluntary commitment.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to ensuring that only safe products can be sold in the UK and the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is working to ensure that major online marketplaces play their part in protecting UK consumers from unsafe goods.

As part of this work, the OPSS is developing a new voluntary commitment for online marketplaces to agree actions they will take to reduce the risks from unsafe products being sold online. This will enable online marketplaces to demonstrate their commitment to the safety of their consumers in the UK by publicly promising to work with UK regulators and details will be published in due course.

The OPSS is also conducting a review of the Product Safety framework to ensure it is fit for purpose, protects consumers, and enables businesses to innovate and grow. The review will consider the impact on product safety of new technologies and new business models, including e-commerce.

Ben Lake:

[155321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the potential merits of including the sale of unsafe goods within the scope of the Online Safety Bill.

Paul Scully:

The UK Government is committed to tackling the sale of unsafe consumer products online. The UK's national regulator, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), works with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in considering the challenges and opportunities of e-commerce.

There is already an extensive regulatory framework aimed at ensuring the safety of goods, including those sold online. The OPSS is currently reviewing that framework to ensure it is fit for purpose, protects consumers, and enables businesses to innovate and grow. This is the best way to achieve a coherent and comprehensive framework for product safety. The OPSS will continue to work with DCMS and will consider any wider implications of the approach to other online harms in any future policy proposals on product safety.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Helen Hayes:

[154560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the £1.5 billion announced last year for homeowners under the Green Homes Grant has been spent to date; and what estimate he has made of the amount that will be spent under that grant before the end of the financial year.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As of 3pm on 22nd February, 25,770 vouchers have been issued to customers under the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme. The value of these vouchers is currently £111.7 million. Vouchers will become redeemable once scheduled works are completed.

Helen Hayes:

[154565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the projected potential effect of (a) £1.5 billion and (b) £320m investment in the Green Homes Grants scheme on reducing domestic carbon emissions.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As outlined in the [Energy White Paper](#) (2020), emissions from homes and from commercial and public sector buildings account for 19 per cent of total UK

greenhouse gas emissions. In order to meet the net zero target by 2050, we will need to rapidly decarbonise the UK's housing stock.

The Green Homes Grant is designed to provide short term economic stimulus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst helping us meet our net zero commitments. The funding allocated to the scheme represents a significant and accelerated down payment on decarbonising buildings.

Carbon savings as a result of the scheme will depend heavily on the uptake of individual measures by households. An independent evaluation of the processes and outcomes of the Voucher Scheme will run until 2023, with interim publications released prior to the final evaluation report.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[154670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the local authority delivery element of the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme (a) will end on 31 March 2021 and (b) is part of the £320 million of funding for 2021-22 announced for that scheme in the 2020 Spending Review.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme will upgrade the energy efficiency of around 50,000 homes of low-income households across England. The scheme is being delivered in three phases:

- Phase 1A; over £74million was allocated to 55 Local Authorities in October 2020 to fund energy efficiency projects in over 100 Local Authorities by June 2021.
- Phase 1B: around £126million of grant offers were made to 81 Local Authorities in January 2021, for delivery of energy efficiency projects by September 2021. Further details of these allocations will be announced in the coming weeks once Memorandums of Understanding with individual Local Authorities have been signed.
- Phase 2: will see funding of £300m allocated to the five Local Energy Hubs this financial year who will work with Local Authorities in their region to deliver energy efficiency projects by December 2021. Further information on how these funds are being allocated within each region will be confirmed in due course.

The 2020 Spending Review saw £320 million allocated to the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme for 2021-22; this is independent of the £500m allocated to the Local Authority Delivery scheme in July 2020.

Helen Hayes:

[155254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2021 to Question 145087, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) jobs and (b) small businesses of the decision not to roll over underspend in the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Funding of up to £1.5 billion for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme was announced as a short-term economic stimulus in response to the COVID-19

pandemic, for use in the 2020/21 financial year. In the Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £320 million for the scheme in the next financial year, as part of funding to make homes and public buildings more energy efficient.

The scheme is designed to tackle our contribution to climate change and support jobs in green retrofit. We have worked to ensure that jobs are created across the country and there are now 940 installers registered to install measures under the Green Homes Grant.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the voucher scheme, including a comprehensive analysis of scheme outcomes, with evidence collected from scheme applicants, installers and other stakeholders is underway. An independent research organisation, Ipsos MORI, was contracted in December 2020 to undertake the evaluation.

Helen Hayes:

[\[155255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have had work completed under the Green Homes Grant scheme by region.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Official statistics for the Green Homes Grant (Voucher) Scheme were released on 18 February. The data published in this release is for all applications to the end of January 2021.

Based on this data, the number of measures installed ¹ under the scheme, by English geographic region is as follows:

- North East - 167
- North West - 282
- Yorkshire and The Humber - 279
- East Midlands - 234
- West Midlands - 198
- East of England - 521
- London - 248
- South East - 598
- South West - 250

¹ This figure represents the number of measures that have had an installation completed with notification made to the scheme delivery partner on the completion of the work.

Nick Fletcher:

[\[155458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure prompt payments to tradespeople who have received payment for works done in Green Home Grant scheme vouchers.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The payment process is a four-step process that requires the customer to confirm the work has been completed, the installer to record the work on the TrustMark database, the scheme administrator to check the conditions of the voucher issued have been met, and then the scheme administrator ICF to make the payment. The scheme administrator check is to ensure consumer protection and value for money, including undertaking fraud checks. The scheme administrator aims to pay tradespeople as soon as possible after the check is complete.

BEIS officials are working with consumers and installers to ensure they are clear on the information and checks required as part of the payment process, so that installers can be paid as quickly as possible. We will continue to work closely with scheme administrator ICF to identify further process improvements, increase the number of vouchers issued, and ensure timely release of payment.

Ben Everitt:**[155459]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that 100 per cent of the £2 billion allocated budget for the Green Homes Grant is awarded to householders and local authorities by the deadline of March 2022.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The £2 billion pledged to the Green Homes Grant (GHG) is comprised of £500m of funding for the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) element and £1.5 billion of funding originally allocated to the Voucher Scheme for use in the 2020/21 financial year.

All £500m LAD funding is planned to be allocated to Local Authorities and Regional Energy Hubs, as appropriate, before the end of March 2021. This will be delivered in three phases:

- Phase 1A: over £74 million was allocated in October 2020 to fund energy efficiency projects in over 100 Local Authorities by June 2021.
- Phase 1B: around £126 million of grant offers were made to 81 Local Authorities in January 2021, for delivery of energy efficiency projects by September 2021.
- Phase 2: will see funding of £300m allocated to the five Local Energy Hubs this financial year, to deliver energy efficiency projects by December 2021.

The Voucher Scheme was designed to provide a short-term economic stimulus while tackling our contribution to climate change. However, the prevalence of Covid-19 since the scheme's launch in September last year has led to an understandable reluctance on the part of the public to welcome tradespeople into their homes. We will continue to work with the scheme's administrator to ensure voucher applications are processed as quickly as possible. As of 22 February 2021, 25,770 vouchers have been issued. £320 million of funding was announced for the Voucher Scheme for 2021/22 in the November 2020 Spending Review.

■ Mining: Industrial Waste

Anneliese Dodds:

[155359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the risk posed by coal tips and other mining spoil in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Coal Authority, one of BEIS's Partner Organisations, owns and manages 40 coal tips across the United Kingdom. Full details of the regulatory of inspections for each site, and when they were last inspected, can be found on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disused-colliery-tips-owned-and-inspected-by-the-coal-authority/disused-colliery-tips-managed-by-the-coal-authority-including-location-and-inspection-frequency--2>.

The vast majority of coal tips are under private or Local Authority ownership.

Following the Tylorstown slip in Wales in February 2020, the Coal Authority has undertaken work for the Welsh Government to identify the location and ownership of all the coal tips in Wales. Local authorities in England and Scotland were asked to check any tips they owned and report any concerns. No concerns were reported.

There are no coal tips in Northern Ireland.

■ OneWeb

Nick Smith:

[154937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department spend on (a) external advisers and (b) consultant fees related to the Government's investment in OneWeb.

Amanda Solloway:

Details of the Department's expenditure related to Government's investment in OneWeb are commercially sensitive. The Government is obliged to treat this information with appropriate care to avoid damaging wider commercial interests and maintaining the trust of OneWeb's shareholders.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Foreign Investment in UK: Gulf Cooperation Council

Emily Thornberry:

[154573]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the combined stock of foreign direct investment in the UK from members of the Gulf Cooperation Council was in each calendar year since 2015.

Chloe Smith:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have, therefore, asked the Authority to respond.

Attachments:

1. UKSA's response to PQ 154573 [UKSA's final response to PQ 154573.pdf]

■ Government Departments: Internet**John Spellar:****[154669]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to remove websites from search engines that appear to be from Government departments but are companies charging a fee.

Julia Lopez:

Further to the answer to PQ [59372](#) on 22 June 2020, Government Departments have a number of processes in place to ensure users seeking information from Government Departments, including on search engines, are not diverted to fee-charging and misleading websites.

■ Government Departments: Small Businesses**Darren Henry:****[155435]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions his Department has had with other Departments on supporting small businesses to bid for Government contracts to assist with their post-covid recovery.

Julia Lopez:

Further to my answer to questions on [11 February](#), this Government is doing more than ever to support small businesses to bid for Government contracts and all departments are actively supporting this agenda. Each department has a dedicated SME Champion who works with Commercial teams to promote SME engagement and departments have published SME plans which show how they plan to work with SMEs.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**■ Bishops: Offences against Children****Neil Coyle:****[156411]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what the composition of the (a) Gibbs and (b) Whitsey reviews are; and if he will place non-redacted copies of the reports in the Library.

Andrew Selous:

The review by Dame Moria Gibb in 2017 into Peter Ball, the former Bishop of Gloucester, and the Whitsey review undertaken by His Hon David Pearl in 2019 into Hubert Whitsey, the former Bishop of Chester, are both available in full on the Church of England's website.

The Gibb review, 'An Abuse of Faith', is available here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/report-of-the-peter-ball-review-210617.pdf>

The Whitsey review is available here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/overview/news-and-views/independent-lessons-learnt-review-bishop-whitsey-case>

COP26

■ Climate Change

Ruth Jones:

[\[151841\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what recent assessment he has made of progress towards (a) limiting global heating to well below 2°C and (b) limiting heating to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Alok Sharma:

We have seen significant momentum on climate ambition in recent months, with the likes of China, Japan and South Korea committing to net zero emissions and over 40 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) being submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to date.

However, it is clear that more needs to be done to close the gap to the Paris Agreement temperature goals. As the incoming COP President, I will continue to press all parties to increase their climate commitments to the highest level of ambition possible.

■ Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[150883\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether Mark Carney's Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets falls within his role as Finance Advisor for COP26.

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[151780\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what role (a) the Finance Adviser for COP26, Mark Carney, and (b) his Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets will play in ensuring that companies, asset managers and other financial institutions deliver emissions reductions in line with the Paris Agreement.

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[151781\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what role (a) the Finance Adviser for COP26, Mark Carney, and (b) his Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets will play in the formation of the Government policy in relation to COP26 negotiations on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Alok Sharma:

The Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets (TSVCM) is a private sector-led initiative and is independent of UK Government efforts as the hosts of COP26.

As set out in his Terms of Reference, Mark Carney is focussed on creating a more sustainable financial system to support the path to net zero and embedding climate into every financial decision. His objectives are set out in his published 'Priorities for private finance for COP26'. The work of the TSVCM in supporting companies to contribute to reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement is set out in the Taskforce's final report, available at [iif.com/tsvcm](https://www.iif.com/tsvcm).

Neither the Finance Advisor for COP26, Mark Carney, nor the Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets will play a role in the formation of Government policy in relation to COP26 negotiations on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021**Alison Thewliss:**[\[153282\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to engage with the residents of Glasgow Central in preparation of the COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Glasgow businesses and residents play a crucial role in the delivery and overall success of an event such as COP26. The Government is working with Glasgow City Council to engage local people around COP26 through local activations. We launched a Host City Volunteering programme in January to recruit volunteers at COP26, who will play a key role in representing Glasgow and the UK to delegates from around the world.

Through the 'Get Ready Glasgow' public information campaign, Glasgow City Council have developed an integrated and tailored programme of sustained and timely communication and engagement activities with local residents and businesses. This will inform them about the impacts on city operations and daily lives, and the opportunities presenting themselves to residents and local businesses by being the host city.

Through the 'Together for our Planet' campaign, the Government will continue engaging the whole country in the conversation around climate change leading up to COP26. The campaign will celebrate people across the UK already taking action and inspire more to join them.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: UK Delegations**Lee Anderson:**[\[153371\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, which Ministers in addition to the Prime Minister he plans to appoint to the UK's delegation for COP26 in November.

Alok Sharma:

The Government is currently developing the plan for those who will be included under the COP26 UK delegation.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus****John Healey:**[\[154750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many general duty personnel are currently (a) trained as vaccinators and (b) training to be qualified vaccinators.

James Heappey:

As of 23 February Defence has trained 36 general duties personnel to be vaccinators to support the COVID-19 response, with a further 239 undergoing training.

John Healey:[\[154752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Combat Medical Technicians are currently on standby to assist with vaccinations in the event that the Department of Health and Social Care submit a Military Aid to Civilian Authority request.

James Heappey:

As at 23 February, 220 Combat Medical Technicians (CMTs) are supporting vaccination tasks as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 250 additional CMTs are held at readiness.

Defence has also been working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care on a programme of training for general duties personnel to bolster the number of qualified vaccinators we could provide should further support be requested.

John Healey:[\[154753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many covid-19 vaccinations the armed forces have carried out since the start of the covid-19 vaccination roll out.

James Heappey:

Data on the administration of COVID-19 vaccinations is collated by the Department of Health and Social Care to which Defence does not have access.

The Ministry of Defence does not collect data on vaccinations given by its personnel.

John Healey:[\[154754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many covid-19 vaccination centres have been built by the armed forces.

James Heappey:

The armed forces have assisted with the establishment of 60 COVID-19 vaccination centres in Scotland and England.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Alex Sobel:

[\[155360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many homes (a) are designated as service family accommodation as of 17 February 2021 and (b) were designated as service family accommodation in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

The table below provides details of the number of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) by year from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020, with February 2021 details based on data as of 17 February 2021:

MA											FEBRUARY
RCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	2021 (AS OF
201	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	17
0											FEBRUARY)
49,100	49,100	49,000	49,400	49,400	49,600	49,700	49,500	49,800	49,600	49,400	49,200

■ Armed Forces: Pay

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[154826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2021 to Question 150701 on Armed Forces: Pay, whether his Department has implemented the pay increase recommendations of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body.

Johnny Mercer:

As stated in my answer of 11 February 2021, the recommendations of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) have always been accepted by the Ministry of Defence. The Department has always implemented the AFPRB's pay increase recommendations, including in 2013 when the 0.5% increase in X-Factor was delivered a month late, and in 2018 when the Government implemented a 2% consolidated uplift with a 0.9% non-consolidated payment to meet the spirit of the AFPRB's 2.9% recommendation.

■ Armed Forces: Training

John Healey:

[\[154751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how long the training is for general duty personnel to become qualified vaccinators.

James Heappey:

The training package for general duties personnel to become qualified vaccinators lasts up to four days.

■ Defence: Procurement

Dan Jarvis:

[\[155042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to increase the use of British businesses in Defence procurement contracts.

Jeremy Quin:

We are examining our future approach to industry through the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy review. Alongside this, we are working with industry in the UK through the Defence Prosperity Programme. Together with other Government Departments, the Ministry of Defence will be implementing the recently launched Social Value in procurement model to assess Defence supplier's social impact. This looks to promote new jobs and skills, encourage economic growth and prosperity, tackle climate change and level up the UK - maximising value for money for the taxpayer while also building a more resilient and diverse supplier base.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[154818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the work undertaken by UK-listed companies, through US subsidiaries, as part of the F-35 programme was designated as UK-content.

Jeremy Quin:

UK content is defined as work undertaken by UK Suppliers, both UK and foreign-owned companies, that create value, employment, technology or intellectual assets in the UK. This includes work awarded through US subsidiaries or directly to a UK company.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[154827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the ejector seat on the F-35b manufactured by Martin Baker is regarded as UK content by his Department and contributes to the 15 per cent figure previously cited by his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

The Martin Baker Ejector Seat is in all three F-35 variants and is almost exclusively produced in the UK. Those elements produced in the UK contribute to the UK content of the F-35 Air System.

■ Kenya: Armed Forces

Dan Jarvis:

[\[155043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel undergoing training in the British Army Training Unit Kenya have (a) tested positive (b) been hospitalised for covid-19.

James Heappey:

Regular COVID-19 testing of exercising troops deployed to British Army Training Unit Kenya is taking place, however, in line with other UK government departments and civil authorities, the Ministry of Defence will not be providing a running commentary of case numbers for our personnel.

■ Military Aid: Coronavirus**Dan Jarvis:****[155040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of food provision for armed forces personnel deployed to contain the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heappey:

The provision of food to Armed Forces personnel is assessed continuously by the chain of command of those personnel deployed. Food options provided on Defence premises are routinely monitored and scrutinised by military food service Warrant Officers. Personnel deployed on COVID-19 related activities in locations where Service messing is unavailable receive remuneration to support the purchase of meals.

■ Military Exercises**Dan Jarvis:****[155041]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to review the current protocol for overseas exercises.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence reviews the current protocol for overseas exercises through the Defence Strategic Frameworks to deliver activity in support of Departmental Country Plans and other cross government objectives. In addition, some overseas exercises are required for UK force generation and certification purposes as well as to meet commitments to our Allies and partners. All current and planned exercises remain under continual review by the Department to ensure that the needs are balanced against the safety of our people and that of others.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Bowling: Coronavirus****Dan Jarvis:****[155044]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reopening bowling alleys alongside non-essential retail and leisure businesses after the national covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021 ends.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web

version of the answer:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-19/155044>

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Overseas Aid

Anna McMorris:

[153344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 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.

Mr John Whittingdale:

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, DCMS is included in the "Other Departments" group. In 2019-20, DCMS's ODA allocation was £11m.

Outturn information of 2019 calendar year ODA spend is 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 DCMS's allocation, in a Written Ministerial Statement available online here:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-01-26/hcws735>.

DCMS also manages ODA funding provided by the Prosperity Fund. This is reported separately by the Prosperity Fund.

■ Gyms and Sports: Coronavirus

Theresa Villiers:

[154852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will include in its plans for the easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions a date by which (a) gyms, (b) squash courts and (c) other indoor sports facilities can re-open.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity providers and facilities are at the heart of our communities, and play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

On Monday 22 February, the Prime Minister announced a roadmap out of the current lockdown in England. The approach focuses on data, not dates. Each step has a “no earlier than” date, 5 weeks later than the previous step, to allow time to assess the impact of the previous step and provide a week’s notice before changes occur.

Step 2 will take place no earlier than 12 April and as part of this indoor sport facilities including gyms for individual use will reopen. Group exercise and indoor adult sport will be allowed as part of Step 3 of the roadmap which will take place no earlier than 17 May. This will be subject to social contact limits.

■ Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

Alexander Stafford: [\[153428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what is the total amount of funding that has been made available through the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme since 2012.

Nigel Huddleston:

In 2012, DCMS and HM Treasury became joint funders of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and annual funding was increased to up to £42m (to offset changes to the rate of VAT on alterations) with DCMS funding the first £17m with the further (up to) £25m coming from HMT reserves. In total, the amount available to the grant scheme amounts to £378m since 2012.

Alexander Stafford: [\[153429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been made available through the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme in (a) 2016 - 2017, (b) 2017 - 2018, (c) 2018 - 2019, (d) 2019 - 2020 and (e) in the current financial year.

Nigel Huddleston:

Between DCMS and HM Treasury, the funding available for the Listed Places of Worship Grant is up to £42m. The following figures show what was claimed for each of the financial years:

- 2016/2017 - £31,298,390.23
- 2017/2018 - £33,166,559.49
- 2018/2019 - £34,517,766.03
- 2019/2020 - £34,078,628.89
- Current Financial Year (up to 31/1/21) - £22,566,078.26

Alexander Stafford: [\[153430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many places of worship have been received support under the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme since 2012.

Nigel Huddleston:

The administrator for the scheme, TopMark, took over in 2014. They have paid out 45,655 grants to approximately 16,170 places of worship. Between 2012 and 2014, the previous administrator for the grant paid out 4,035 grants to 3,425 Listed Places of Worship.

Sir David Amess:[\[154676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answers of 17 December 2020 to Question 128492 and of 20 January 2021 to Question 137326, whether he plans to extend the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme beyond 31 March 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

I am pleased to be able to confirm that the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme will be renewed this year on the same terms as it operated previously.

This scheme will continue to benefit listed places of worship across the country during these difficult times. It will also help to ensure that they are able to reopen fully once it is safe to do so.

Local Press and Radio: Advertising**Martyn Day:**[\[152582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 September 2020 to Question 77680, on Newspaper Press and Radio: Taxation, what assessment he has made of the merits of the Advertising Association's proposals for an advertising tax credit for local radio stations and news publications.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Supporting our world leading media businesses, such as Newspaper Press and Radio, is a key priority for this Government. Media businesses and freelancers across the country have now been able to take advantage of the unprecedented set of measures set up to support the economy and our media industry.

Conversations with stakeholders across Newspaper Press and Radio are ongoing and we will of course continue to engage with industry, and assess the merits of the government intervening where there is a strong case to do so.

This is a live issue for the government and one we will revisit once the budget has been confirmed.

Reading: Coronavirus**Tracy Brabin:**[\[154658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the reading habits of (a) adults and (b) children.

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.

■ Youth Investment Fund**Bambos Charalambous:****[155303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress the Government is making on the establishment of the £500 million Youth Investment Fund announced by the Chancellor in September 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Youth Investment Fund (YIF) remains a manifesto commitment for levelling up across England over the course of the parliament. In the recently announced Spending Review, £30m of this was committed as capital investment for 2021-22. This will provide investment for new and refurbished safe spaces for young people, so they can access support from youth workers, and positive activities out of school, including sport and culture. Further details of the timetable for allocation of YIF funding in 2021-22, and how the funding will be distributed will be announced in due course.

The department is currently undertaking a review of all DCMS spending on services for young people, including future plans for the Youth Investment Fund, which we anticipate will conclude in May this year.

Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and on the youth services that support them. The £16.5m Youth Covid-19 Support Fund was announced to protect the immediate

future of grassroots and national youth organisations across the country. The fund opened for applications on 15 January 2021 and closed 19 February 2021.

EDUCATION

■ Children's Social Care Independent Review: Public Appointments

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[155056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148802 on Children's Social Care Independent Review, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the process of recruiting the others, as referred to in that Answer, will be transparent; whether that process will follow the requirements for public appointments; how those appointments will be remunerated; and whether there is an agreed budget for those additional appointments.

Vicky Ford:

All recruitment to the review team is carried out in line with the department's processes for appointing and remunerating staff and contractors. All pro bono work will be recorded in the department's registers in the usual way. The department publishes details of contracts and grants as part of transparency returns. The department will work with the lead reviewer to ensure there are sufficient resources available to undertake the review.

■ Further Education Commissioner: Managers

Mr Toby Perkins:

[154959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people are employed in managerial or senior positions at the Further Education Commissioner's office; and how many of those people identify as (a) White European and (b) BAME.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[154960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people the Further Education Commissioner's office employ; at what grades those people are employed; and what the ethnic background is of each of those people employed at each of those grades.

Nick Gibb:

The Further Education Commissioner works with a team of six Deputy Further Education Commissioners and 11 Further Education Advisers, whose details are available on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/further-education-commissioner/about#who-we-are>.

The Further Education Commissioner is also supported by a private office of three civil servants, including one team leader. The Department is unable to release diversity information where figures are fewer than five. These suppression rules are in place to protect the anonymity and privacy of individuals. The Further Education Commissioner also works with a number of civil servants from within the Further

Education Directorate in the Education and Skills Funding Agency, who provide wider support.

■ **Pupils: Coronavirus**

Siobhain McDonagh:

[154704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many school pupils (a) are eligible to take part in the mass asymptomatic covid-19 testing programme in schools, (b) have parental consent to take part in the scheme and (c) do not yet have parental consent and are unable to be tested under the scheme.

Nick Gibb:

To date, all secondary and college pupils are eligible to take part in the Mass Asymptomatic Testing Programme. Regarding consent, schools and colleges are the individual data controllers responsible for processing any personal data, including obtaining and maintaining records of consent, for testing carried out on their sites. As part of testing, schools and colleges share data on tests carried out with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), at which point DHSC becomes the data controller. Therefore, the Department for Education does not hold the requested information.

■ **Pupils: Hearing Impairment**

Sarah Owen:

[152656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued on the use of clear face masks in schools to allow deaf children to be able to better communicate in those settings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Guidance for schools for the period of national lockdown can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

The Department has published updated guidance on face coverings in education from 8 March 2021, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>.

As our updated guidance outlines, where pupils in Year 7 and above are taught, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

In addition, we now also recommend that face coverings should be worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained. We are recommending this precautionary measure for a limited time during this period of high COVID-19 prevalence in the community.

In primary schools, face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible, for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas. Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability, or if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate. The same exemptions should be applied in schools, and we would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs.

Transparent face coverings which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn. There is currently very limited evidence regarding the effectiveness or safety of transparent face coverings, but they may be more effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 than not wearing a face covering at all.

We continue to work closely with Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care and stakeholders across the sector to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice

These measures will be in place until Easter. We will keep this under review and update guidance at that point.

■ Pupils: Mental Health

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[154735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the awareness among school pupils of mental health issues; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

The government is committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people.

Since September 2020, all pupils and students in state-funded schools are being taught about mental health as part of compulsory relationship, sex and health education. We are providing support for teaching that covers all of the key teaching requirements and prioritised the production of the training module covering mental wellbeing, so that it was available before the end of the summer term last year.

Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

The government is also providing information and advice directly to children, young people and families. Public Health England have produced guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and adapted its Every Mind Matters and Rise Above platforms in the context of the outbreak. Further information can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every->

[mind-matters/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAlaIQobChMluKSHjPr97glVCbDtCh2XSwwcEAAYASAAEgKgJfD_BwE](#) and <https://riseabove.org.uk/>.

We know that the COVID-19 outbreak is having an effect on the mental wellbeing of children and young people. Our Wellbeing for Education Return programme, backed by £8 million, has trained local experts to provide additional advice and resources for schools and further education providers to help support pupil and student, parent and carer, and staff wellbeing, resilience and recovery in light of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown. It will give staff the confidence to support pupils and students, their parents, carers and their own colleagues, and know how and where to access appropriate specialist support where needed. Additional information can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-pupils-wellbeing>.

The department is convening a Mental Health in Education Action Group, to 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 between education settings in September 2021.

The government remains committed to long term improvements to support children and young people's mental health, set out in the government's response to its green paper and NHS Long Term Plan. This includes rolling out new Mental Health Support Teams to work with a fifth to a quarter of schools and colleges across the country by academic year 2023/24, offering training for a senior mental health lead in every state school in the country, and Link Programme training for all schools and colleges to help frontline health and education professionals work together effectively .

■ Remote Education: Carers

Gill Furniss:

[152598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to specifically support the home-learning of young carers during covid-19 related school closures.

Nick Gibb:

From 8 March 2021, all schools and colleges should allow full attendance. Schools affected by the remote education temporary continuity direction are still required to provide remote education for pupils covered by the direction where their attendance would be contrary to Government guidance or legislation around the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a class, group, or small number of pupils need to self-isolate or clinically extremely vulnerable children need to shield. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-temporary-continuity-direction-explanatory-note>.

During the period of national lockdown, the Department expects all primary schools, secondary schools, and further education (FE) colleges in England to provide remote

education for the majority of their pupils and students, with the exception of vulnerable children and young people, and the children of critical workers, who can attend school or FE colleges in person. Where vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers do not attend school or FE colleges, the Department expects schools and FE colleges to provide them with remote education. The definition of vulnerable children and young people includes children who have a social worker, an education, health, and care plan or who may be vulnerable for another reason. This may include young carers.

The Government is providing over £400 million to support remote education and online social care, including securing 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people. This includes over one million laptops and tablets that were delivered to schools, FE colleges, academy trusts, and local authorities by 15 February 2021.

Where remote education is needed and pupils and students continue to experience barriers to remote education, the Department expects schools and FE college to work to overcome these barriers. This could include distributing school or FE college owned laptops or supplementing digital provision with different forms of remote education such as printed resources or textbooks. Where young carers require further support with their remote education, the Department encourages them to speak to their school or college.

The return to school for all pupils is being prioritised due to the significant and proven impact caused by being out of school, including on wellbeing. The support schools provide to their pupils as they return to face-to-face education should include time devoted to supporting wellbeing, which will play a fundamental part in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing recovery. The expectations for schools in this regard are set out clearly in the main Department for Education guidance to schools.

The Government's £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme is facilitating local expert support for education staff to respond to emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be facing. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8m-programme-to-boost-pupil-and-teacher-wellbeing>.

The Government has provided over £11 million to the See, Hear, Respond programme to support vulnerable children and young people whose usual support networks have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, including young carers as a target group. The programme provides a range of support, including online counselling and helping children and young people stay connected with school.

The Government has also published guidance for both schools and local authorities on how best to support families and protect vulnerable children during the COVID-19 outbreak, alongside guidance for young people with caring responsibilities. This guidance includes information on how and where they can find help and support, including encouraging them to speak to someone they trust at their school or college,

like a teacher or school nurse, concerning their caring responsibilities and how this might affect them. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-providing-care-during-coronavirus/guidance-for-those-under-25-who-provide-care-for-someone>.

■ Remote Education: ICT

Siobhain McDonagh: [154702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) laptops and tablets and (b) 4G wireless routers have been delivered to (i) schools, (ii) local authorities and (iii) academy trusts as of 15 February 2021.

Siobhain McDonagh: [154703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the remote education support scheme being offered by mobile phone networks in partnership with his Department, how many pupils are receiving support offered by (a) EE, (b) O2, (c) Sky Mobile, (d) SMARTY, (e) Tesco Mobile, (f) Three, (g) Virgin Mobile and (f) Vodafone as of 15 February 2021.

Nick Gibb:

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. More information can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data>. This data is published every week during term time.

The Department has partnered with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help disadvantaged children get online. We will provide official statistics on the number of requests received for uplifts in mobile data in early March 2021. We will not be able to provide a breakdown of the numbers of requests received for each provider as this information is commercially sensitive for providers.

We are grateful to EE, Lycamobile, O2, Sky Mobile, Smarty, Tesco Mobile, Three, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, Vodafone, iD Mobile and giffgaff for supporting the mobile data offer. We are currently engaged with additional mobile network operators to provide further support through this offer.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Seema Malhotra: [151721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with colleges and universities on the loaning of books to students who are studying at home during the covid-19 lockdown.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education providers should consider appropriate provision to support access to university facilities for the purposes of online learning.

On 22 February 2021, we issued updated guidance on students returning to, and starting, higher education in the spring term 2021, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963446/HE_guidance_spring_term_220221_FINAL.pdf. As outlined in the guidance, we expect university libraries to stay open to provide library services during the lockdown, including the provision of study space and borrowing materials if necessary. Libraries have continued to adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak, including by offering order and collect services and providing digital services.

We are clear that universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the resources to study remotely.

We are now advising providers that they can resume in-person teaching and learning for students who are studying practical or practice-based subjects (including creative arts) and require specialist equipment and facilities from 8 March 2021. Providers should not ask students to return if their course can reasonably be continued online. The government will review, by the end of the Easter holidays, the options for timing of the return of remaining students. This review will take account of the latest data and will be a key part of the wider roadmap steps.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Stephen Morgan:

[912528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. what steps the Government has taken to prioritise improving air quality in preparation for COP26.

Rebecca Pow:

Air quality has improved significantly since 2010. We are committed to leaving the environment in a better state for the next generation.

Our Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources. The World Health Organization has recognised the Strategy as an example for the rest of the world to follow.

The Environment Bill delivers a number of key elements of the strategy including establishing a duty to set a target on PM2.5 alongside a further long-term target on air quality as part of the wider framework for setting legally binding environmental targets. As set out in a policy paper published in August 2020, we're also specifically looking at average population exposure to PM2.5 across England and setting an additional long-term target on this. The Report Stage is set to recommence early in the Second Session and Royal Assent expected in Autumn.

We have put in place a £3.8 billion plan to improve air quality and deliver cleaner transport.

We have also introduced our statutory instrument containing regulations to phase out the sale of the most polluting solid fuels (wet wood, bituminous (house) coal and high sulphur manufactured solid fuels) used in domestic combustion. This area is critical as domestic burning is a major source of our national emissions of PM2.5.

Climate change and air pollution are closely coupled because the sources of air pollutants are also often the sources of climate change agents. the UK recognises the potential for carbon emission reduction policies to improve air quality but also the risk that some approaches can increase human exposure to air pollution. The UK supports decarbonisation approaches that strive to improve air quality and minimise adverse impacts on human health, balanced with action to achieve reductions in carbon emissions.

■ Animal Products: Imports

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[155096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the import of hunting trophies.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government committed in its manifesto to introduce a ban on the import of hunting trophies from endangered species. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the publication of the Government response to the recent consultation and call for evidence on controls on the import and export of hunting trophies. We will set out our plans for action on this important area as soon as it is practical to do so.

■ Dogs: Imports

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[155408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported under the Balai Directive in each month of 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

The figures for dogs imported under the Balai Directive for 2020 are as follows:

MONTH	DOGS IMPORTED
January	4181
February	4078
March	2721
April	654
May	4828
June	5072
July	5789

MONTH	DOGS IMPORTED
August	3815
September	2386
October	4108
November	3411
December	5446

■ **Game: Birds**

Bill Wiggin:

[\[154808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his commitment to introduce a licensing regime for game bird releasing on certain European protected sites for 2021, whether there are sites which have been identified as being in unfavourable status as a result of pheasant or red leg partridge release; what steps Natural England has taken to improve the status of those sites; and whether those sites have improved since the designation of that status.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England works closely with the owners and occupiers of protected sites and routinely assesses consent applications to ensure that any gamebird releasing operations that may be proposed would not have harmful effects on the habitats and species of special interest for which these sites are protected. As of 22 February 2021, Natural England has assessed three European Sites (or parts of them) as being in an unfavourable condition as a result of gamebird releasing activity and requiring remedial action. Natural England continues to work with the managers at all these sites to investigate and remedy the issues identified, including enforcement action where appropriate.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[154809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's policy that gamebird releases require a buffer zone from a European protected site, for what reason (a) walking, (b) organised bird watching events and (c) other activities which can disturb wildlife within several hundred meters do not have a buffer zone applied to them.

Rebecca Pow:

There is scientific evidence that the release of non-native gamebirds can have negative impacts on protected habitats and species, particularly through nutrient enrichment of the soil and depletion of vegetation, and that these impacts can be felt beyond the point of release. Whilst we look to improve our understanding of this impact on specific sites Defra's interim general licence proposals on non-native

gamebird releases therefore relate not only to European protected sites but a buffer zone around these sites.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron: [\[154796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 17 November 2020, (b) 6 January 2021 and (c) 3 February 2021 from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay, constituency case reference JB30050.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has transferred the hon. Member's correspondence to the Department of Health and Social Care for response.

Dave Doogan: [\[155380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2021 to Question 143107, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Angus of 3 December 2020 on the potential revocation of Vydate for treatment of potato crops, reference DD526.

Victoria Prentis:

I apologise for the further delay in responding. A reply was issued to the hon. Member for Angus on 23 February 2021.

■ National Parks Review

Barry Gardiner: [\[154683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Government plans to publish its formal response to the Glover Review.

Sir Geoffrey Cox: [\[154855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to implement the recommendations of the 2019 Landscapes Review; and when he plans to publish the Government's response to that review.

Rebecca Pow:

The independent Landscapes Review, led by Julian Glover, set out a compelling vision for more beautiful, more biodiverse and more accessible National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

We welcome this ambition, as the government is committed to ensuring our protected landscapes flourish as havens for nature and are places that everyone can visit and enjoy.

The Landscapes Review included recommendations for long-term structural changes, such as creating a new National Landscape Service and changing National Park and AONB statutory purposes, that would require legislation were they to be taken forward.

We are taking time to carefully consider the recommendations and working with partner organisations to inform and develop our response to the review, which we will publish in due course.

In the meantime, we are working to implement the ambitions of the Review on the ground now. For example, we are leading a £5.77m cross-governmental project to test nature-based social prescribing in seven test and learn sites, run national experimental work to understand its scalability, and deliver a robust project evaluation. This will help improve mental health and wellbeing by connecting more people to nature, including in protected landscapes.

The £80m Green Recovery Challenge Fund, which launched in September 2020, will kickstart a programme of nature-based projects to restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with the natural environment. Some of these projects will help deliver on the Landscape Review's recommendations, such as the proposal to give every child a night under the stars in a national landscape.

■ **Pet Travel Scheme: Dogs**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[155409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported using the Pet Travel Scheme in each month of 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

The number of dogs imported using the Pet Travel Scheme for 2020 are as below:

MONTH	DOGS IMPORTED
January	22454
February	12160
March	13281
April	1554
May	4433
June	7470
July	17984
August	33413
September	23037
October	16605
November	12477
December	17231

Pets: Travel**Peter Grant:**[\[154637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made with the European Commission in securing Part 1 listed status for pet travel between the UK and the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

The Department previously submitted an application to the European Commission to become a 'Part 1' listed third country in relation to non-commercial movement of pet dogs, cats and ferrets. On 3 December 2020 the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed of the EU voted in favour of, and has now adopted, the UK as a 'Part 2' listed status third country for the non-commercial movement of pet dogs, cats and ferrets.

We are clear we meet all the animal health requirements to become a Part 1 listed third country and have one of the most rigorous pet checking regimes in Europe to protect our biosecurity. Our disease risk has not changed, and we recognise the challenges that Part 2 listed status poses for those travelling with pets and assistance dogs. We have reiterated this, and will continue to press the EU Commission on securing Part 1 listed status, alongside securing recognised tapeworm free status from the EU.

Sewage: River Derwent**Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[155007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many litres of untreated sewage spilled into the River Derwent in Mid Derbyshire in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

Event Duration Monitors (EDM) record the number of times there has been a discharge of storm sewage and for how long each discharge was for. The Water Companies send in an annual summary which gives the total number of discharges per year and the total duration per year for each site where it is a permit requirement. The 2020 data is not yet available as it is submitted at the end of February.

Event Duration Monitors started being installed in 2016 and have been progressively installed across Combined Sewer Overflows, Sewage Pumping Stations and Sewage Treatment Works. Not all sites require EDM monitoring, this depends on the sensitivity of where the discharge is made.

Direct storm sewage discharges to the River Derwent, Derbyshire (Source to confluence with River Trent)

YEAR	2018	2019
Number of sites reporting EDM 26 Data		45
Total number of storm sewage 983 spills		1788
Total duration (hours) of storm 3845 sewage spills		12475

The discharge from these water company assets (in this case Severn Trent Water Ltd) is only permitted to occur when there is elevated flow in the combined (sewage and surface water) sewerage network due to rainfall/snowmelt. The discharge is known as storm sewage and the impact on water quality is reduced due to the increased dilution both within the sewer and the receiving watercourse.

In January 2021 the Storm Overflows Taskforce announced plans by the water companies to accelerate work to install monitoring devices on all storm overflows by 2023. The Environment Agency is working with all water companies to increase the transparency of EDM data by 2022. This will provide readily accessible data in a consistent format, which will give greater visibility and increase responsibility of water companies to go faster and further in reducing harm from storm overflow discharges.

■ Special Protection Areas: Outdoor Recreation

Bill Wiggin:

[154810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of European protected areas are in unfavourable status as a result of (a) shooting and (b) other outdoor sports and leisure recreation activities.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England publishes information on the condition of Protected Sites in England at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SearchEngland.aspx>. All land which forms part of a terrestrial European Site (i.e. a Special Area of Conservation ('SAC') and/or a Special Protection Area ('SPA')) is also notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI').

Natural England records the reasons for unfavourable site condition but there is no specific category for "shooting" or 'outdoor sport, leisure and recreation'. Of the total area of SSSI land that is currently reported as being in unfavourable condition, 2.37% (3223 hectares) is recorded as unfavourable due to public access, disturbance and illicit vehicle use, (which may include outdoor sport, leisure and recreational activity). 0.25% (317.08 hectares) is due to game management, which may include shooting activity.

■ Whisky: Scotland**Ian Murray:** [\[154963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the ability of the Scotch Whisky industry to contribute to national economic recovery after the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

No specific assessment has been made of the ability of the Scotch whisky industry to contribute to the national economic recovery from Covid-19. The Scotch whisky industry makes a significant contribution to the UK economy. We are confident that the strength and resilience of the industry will ensure that it successfully recovers from these challenging times and continues to contribute.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Andrew Selous:** [\[153159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether British businesses were given the opportunity to bid for the St Helena airport contract; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

British businesses were given the opportunity to bid for the St Helena Airport contract. On three separate occasions the St Helena Government sought expressions of interest through Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), this was in line with UK Government procurement regulations for large infrastructure projects at the time.

■ Aung San Suu Kyi**Ruth Jones:** [\[152636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last had direct contact with Aung San Suu Kyi.

Nigel Adams:

The last direct contact the UK Government had with Aung San Suu Kyi was on 20 November 2020, when the Prime Minister spoke with her following her election win. In the call the Prime Minister raised his concern at the actions of the military and noted that the UK would continue to push for progress on the Rohingya crisis and the situation in Rakhine, including on the international stage.

■ BBC Monitoring**Dr Julian Lewis:** [\[154680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the BBC Monitoring Service in

providing open source information to (a) his Department, (b) the Ministry of Defence and (c) the Cabinet Office; what recent assessment he has made of the contribution that Service to the Government's understanding of (i) the covid-19 pandemic in affected countries and (ii) the poisoning of Alexei Navalny in Russia; what plans he has to (A) make an assessment of trends in the level of workload of the Service and (B) reverse Service staff funding reductions made on relocation from Caversham Park to Central London; if he will make it his policy to restore ring-fenced funding to the Service; what plans he has to make an assessment of the role of the Service as part of the Integrated Review; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

BBC Monitoring (BBCM) provides services for the whole of Government and consistently meets or exceeds all agreed performance metrics as set out in the Monitoring Agreement. The use of BBCM across government is increasing with 30 departments and agencies using the service. For example, BBCM outputs make a direct contribution to situational awareness in support of MOD activities worldwide, and the Open Source Unit (OSU) in the FCDO, relies on BBCM's unique media monitoring, reporting and analysis alongside other sources to provide situational awareness and understanding of the wider context to FCDO policy leads.

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent of Government and therefore it is not appropriate for us to comment on matters such as staffing. The Government is satisfied with the current funding model and BBC Monitoring's ability to deliver the service based on agreed performance targets. The full conclusions of the Integrated Review will be published in due course.

■ **BBC World Service**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[154679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the BBC World Service in expanding (a) its reach to additional countries, (b) the number of its language services broadcast and (c) the overall size of its global audience; what recent assessment has been made of the contribution of the World Service to global understanding of major developments in (i) Burma, (ii) China and (iii) Russia; what plans his Department has to restore ring-fenced funding of the BBC World Service for 2021-22; what plans he has to make an assessment of the role of the BBC World Service as part of the Integrated Review; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO strongly values the work of the BBC World Service in promoting UK values globally through its independent and impartial broadcasting, which is vital especially in places where media freedom is limited or otherwise curtailed.

We have provided the World Service with over £378m over 5 years (2016-21) through the World2020 programme, in order to fund enhancements to existing language services and 12 new language services. The World Service now reaches a

record breaking 351m people weekly, an over 40% increase since the programme began in 2016, demonstrating the impact of FCDO investment. Future funding for the World Service is being considered alongside other FCDO spending priorities at SR20 and the role of the BBC World Service, and other soft power assets, is being considered as part of the Integrated Review.

■ BBC World Service: Finance

Jamie Stone: [\[155305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to announce his decision on the allocation of additional funding for the BBC World Service for the financial year 2021-22.

Jamie Stone: [\[155306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the contribution of the BBC World Service to extending UK soft power.

Jamie Stone: [\[155307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will commit to allocating long-term funding to the BBC World Service to enable that broadcaster to further extend its reach.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO strongly values the work of the BBC World Service in promoting our values globally through its independent and impartial broadcasting. It is an integral part of our soft power.

We have provided the World Service with over £378m over 5 years (2016-21) through the World2020 programme, in order to fund enhancements to existing language services and 12 new language services. The World Service now reaches a record breaking 351m people weekly, an over 40% increase since the programme began in 2016, demonstrating the impact of FCDO investment. Future funding for the World Service is being considered alongside other FCDO spending priorities at SR20 and will be announced in due course.

■ Belarus: Human Rights

Catherine West: [\[155278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Belarus on (a) police in that country beating up and arresting workers at their workplaces and (b) other instances of police brutality.

Catherine West:

[\[155279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Belarusian counterpart on reports of trade union and human rights abuses by Belarusian authorities.

Catherine West:

[\[155280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Belarusian Counterpart on the reported raid of the offices and homes of trade union activists and human rights defenders on 16 February 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is deeply concerned by the continuing campaign of oppression against the opposition movement and attacks against those seeking democratic and progressive reform in Belarus. The UK initiated the independent investigation under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism into the systematic violation of people's rights and has supported the UN Human Rights Commissioner in providing a comprehensive report on the situation. The Government has repeatedly condemned the actions of the Belarusian regime and called for the release of all those arbitrarily arrested, including workers facing politically motivated criminal charges.

The Government has raised our concerns directly to the authorities through bilateral representation and with our international partners. Her Majesty's Ambassador spoke directly to the Belarusian Deputy Foreign Minister on 21 January. The Foreign Secretary issued a Joint Statement with the Canadian Foreign Minister, Marc Garneau, on 17 February to condemn the assault on civil liberties, following coordinated raids by Belarusian security forces against human rights, independent media and trade union organisations. In parallel, the British, US and Swiss Embassies in Minsk, alongside the EU delegation, issued a joint statement condemning the raids and calling for the cessation of attacks against civil society, trade union representatives and defence lawyers.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: UN Convention on the Law of the Sea**

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[154661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148829 on British Indian Ocean Territory, what his policy is on the application to the UK of the principles and rules (a) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and (b) referenced in the UK Note Verbale (UK NV No 162/20), dated 16 September 2020, to the United Nations.

Nigel Adams:

The United Kingdom is fully committed to upholding the rules of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and securing the implementation of its rights and obligations. This commitment was reaffirmed in our statement to the UN General Assembly on the adoption of the UNGA Resolution (A/RES/75/239) on the oceans and law of the sea on 8 December 2020. The Government has placed a paper setting out our legal position on the issues in the South China Sea in the Libraries of both

Houses of Parliament and we reaffirmed our position in a Note Verbale (UK NV No 162/20) to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on 16 September 2020.

■ Climate Change Convention

Lee Anderson: [\[153372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will list the (a) Conference of the Parties and (b) Meeting of the Parties to which the UK sends a delegation.

Nigel Adams:

There are numerous international Conferences of the Parties and Meetings of the Parties organised on both environmental and non-environmental issues (e.g. Biodiversity COP, Desertification, Chemical Weapons).

Our attendance at these spans several government departments across Whitehall and the aim of the UK Government is to attend all it is permitted to join.

■ Developing Countries: Education

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[155296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he discussed the 2021-22 budgets for (a) education and (b) girls education at his meeting with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Girls' Education on 17 February 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary met Helen Grant MP on 17 February to discuss her appointment as UK Special Envoy for Girls' Education, and their joint vision for her role in the year ahead. The conversation focused predominantly on stakeholder engagement, particularly in the lead up to the UK's co-hosting of the financing summit for the Global Partnership for Education in July.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services

Dan Carden: [\[155346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes of the planned reduction in UK ODA spending from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of GNI.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is proud to champion comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning; these are fundamental to the empowerment of girls and women. Advancing gender equality and women's rights are a core part of the UK Government's work on development, including enabling girls to fulfil 12 years of quality education.

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. The aim is to ensure UK ODA is focused on strategic priorities, where it will have the maximum impact, enable greater coherence and deliver the most value for money. Officials are now working through the implications of these allocations. No decisions on individual sectoral budgets have been taken yet by Ministers.

■ Ethiopia: Christianity

Stephen Doughty:

[\[155046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports of (a) attacks and killing of Christians in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, including at the Church of Mariam of Zion in Aksum, and (b) desecration of religious sites.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned at the mounting evidence of human rights abuses and violations, including allegations of massacres of civilians, attacks on places of worship as well as damage to cultural monuments and artefacts. An ongoing lack of access to the Tigray region and conflicting reporting means that it remains difficult to confirm these reports, but we will continue to work with partners to seek further information. All parties to the conflict must respect human rights and avoid civilian loss of life at all costs. We have raised our concerns with Ethiopian Ministers, making clear the overriding need to protect civilians and adhere to international law and international human rights law. We continue to call for independent, international, investigations into allegations of human right abuses and violations, and unfettered access to Tigray - points the Foreign Secretary discussed with Prime Minister Abiy in Addis Ababa on 22 January. We also continue to call for the perpetrators of those incidents to be held to account, whoever they may be.

■ Ethiopia: Food

Stephen Doughty:

[\[154570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people facing serious food insecurity in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

The UN estimates that up to 1.3 million people affected by the conflict need humanitarian assistance, though the lack of free and sustained access makes it extremely challenging to determine the actual impact of the conflict on civilians - an estimated 80% of Tigray region remains beyond the reach of relief agencies.

This is on top of an existing humanitarian caseload of 1 million people in the region. The Foreign Secretary raised the need for humanitarian access to Tigray with Prime Minister Abiy during his recent visit to Ethiopia and pressed for a political dialogue to bring lasting peace to the region. The UK is working closely with humanitarian and

development agencies, including the Ethiopian Red Cross, to make sure aid reaches civilians affected by the fighting. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are working hard to deliver support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. The Foreign Secretary visited Gondar, the site of a humanitarian hub in the neighbouring Amhara region on 22 January. He heard how £11.4m of UK Aid is supporting the World Food Programme and NGOs to ensure the delivery of aid to those affected by the conflict.

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

Stephen Doughty:

[\[155047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many officials in his Department are (a) seconded to and (b) working jointly for the Department for International Trade.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office are currently operating on legacy systems, which captures staff data using different criteria. Therefore this information is not held centrally for all staff.

■ **Human Rights**

Dawn Butler:

[\[154843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to improve support and protection for human rights defenders throughout the world.

Nigel Adams:

The UK supports Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) through bilateral engagement via our global network of Embassies and High Commissions and through multilateral organisations. Colleagues in our diplomatic network monitor cases, observe trials, and raise issues with host governments relating to HRDs. In 2019, we launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders', drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International. It set out in detail how we would work and engage with HRDs to promote and protect human rights throughout the world. Just over a year ago, the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, issued a statement at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, voicing concern about the harassment and all too often imprisonment of HRDs. On International Human Rights Defenders Day on 9 December 2020, he also issued a message to all HRDs thanking them for their courageous work and their unwavering determination in fighting for human rights. When he visits countries in his capacity as Minister for Human Rights, he makes a point of talking directly to HRDs. Listening to them helps inform the decisions we make and inspires us to do more. In the context of the establishment of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, we shall consider what more the UK can do to support HRDs.

■ India: Agriculture

Afzal Khan:

[\[155375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what meetings he has had with British Sikh organisations on the ongoing farmers protests in India.

Nigel Adams:

The Sikh community is an important part of British society and we value our engagement with Sikh organisations on a range of issues. We have not met British Sikh organisations specifically to discuss the farmers' protests, but the FCDO has exchanged correspondence with several organisations and individuals on this matter. This month, the FCDO issued a public response to an e-petition regarding the farmers' protests. The UK Government will continue to follow the protests closely, while respecting that agricultural reforms are a matter for India.

■ Iran: Terrorism

Theresa Villiers:

[\[154849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the recent conviction in Belgium of Iranian diplomat, Assodollah Assadi, of terrorism offences, if he will (a) condemn the bomb plot against the Iranian opposition gathering in Paris in 2018 and (b) re-evaluate his Department's policy on Iran.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[154850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Iran following the recent conviction in Belgium of an Iranian diplomat, Assodollah Assadi, for terrorism offences relating to a plot to attack a conference of Iranian opposition parties in Paris in 2018.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government strongly condemns the targeting of civilians and welcomes the fact that those responsible for the plot against a conference in Paris in 2018 have been held to account. We continue to work closely with our European partners on security and counter-terrorism issues.

The UK-Iran bilateral relationship is an important part of our policy and a key enabling tool in achieving our wider goals. Maintaining diplomatic ties allows the UK to discuss a range of issues with Iran, including our mutual interest in upholding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, our consular cases, human rights and Iran's role in the region.

■ Jagtar Singh Johal

Patrick Grady:

[\[154595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the risk faced by UK citizen Jagtar Singh Johal of exposure to covid-19 in Tihar prison, India.

Nigel Adams:

Mr Johal's welfare continues to be a priority. In-person consular visits in India are currently suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, consular staff have secured telephone access to Mr Johal in lieu of visits, and ask questions about Mr Johal's health on every call. We spoke to Mr Johal most recently on 20 January. Tihar prison, as the detaining authority, are responsible for managing any risk to Mr Johal's welfare due to exposure to Covid-19. Our consular staff therefore request regular updates from the prison management about Tihar's Covid-19 prevention measures, testing regime and news of any new cases in the prison.

Patrick Grady:[\[154597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart in respect of reports that UK Citizen, Jagtar Singh Johal, was forced to sign a confession under (a) torture and (b) coercion.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously and raises concerns with the local authorities where appropriate. We regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture, his right to a fair trial, and concerns about delays to legal proceedings against him. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 15 December 2020. The Secretary of State for International Trade raised the case with the Indian Minister for Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad, on 5 February. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 28 January 2021, and with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, on 3 November 2020.

Patrick Grady:[\[154598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on the threat of imposing the death penalty on UK citizen, Jagtar Singh Johal, who is in prison in that country facing trial under anti-terror laws.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We raise this opposition with India regularly as part of discussions on human rights concerns. In individual consular cases we raise our opposition to the death penalty at whichever stages we judge will be most effective.

Hilary Benn:[\[154762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart (a) on the alleged torture of Jagtar Singh Johal and (b) calling for his release; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously and raises concerns with the local authorities where appropriate. We regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture, his right to a fair trial, and concerns about delays to legal proceedings against him. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 15 December 2020. The Secretary of State for International Trade raised the case with the Indian Minister for Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad, on 5 February. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 28 January 2021, and with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, on 3 November 2020.

Hywel Williams:[\[154797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to secure the release of Jagtar Singh Johal.

Nigel Adams:

Under the Vienna Convention of Consular Relations we cannot interfere in the judicial systems of other sovereign states. However, where we have concerns that a British National has not been treated in line with internationally recognized standards, we can raise these concerns with the local authorities. We regularly raise our concerns in Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture, his right to a fair trial, and concerns about delays to legal proceedings against him. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 15 December 2020. The Secretary of State for International Trade raised the case with the Indian Minister for Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad, on 5 February. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 28 January 2021, and with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, on 3 November 2020.

Afzal Khan:[\[155374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release, UK backs Canadian initiative against arbitrary detention, published on 15 February 2021, if he will raise the case of British national Jagtar Singh Johal with his Indian counterpart.

Nigel Adams:

As the Foreign Secretary said in his statement on 15 February, the practice of arbitrarily detaining individuals as leverage over another government is indefensible and the UK will not tolerate it. We continue to regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture, his right to a fair trial, and concerns about delays to legal proceedings against him. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 15 December 2020. The Secretary of State for

International Trade raised the case with the Indian Minister for Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad, on 5 February. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 28 January 2021, and with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, on 3 November 2020.

■ Kashmir: Humanitarian Situation

Afzal Khan:

[\[155373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the visit to Indian Occupied Kashmir by a delegation of MEPs on 17 February 2021, if he will make representations to his Indian counterpart on allowing the United Nations access to Indian Occupied Kashmir to assess the humanitarian situation in that region.

Nigel Adams:

We encourage all states to ensure that domestic laws are in line with international standards and to co-operate with UN human rights officials. We continue to make representations to the Government of India to secure access to India-administered Kashmir for our High Commission staff.

■ Muhammad Ismail

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[155059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterpart on the 2 February 2021 arrest of Professor Muhammad Ismail, the General Secretary of the NGO Forum of Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned about reports of Professor Muhammad Ismail's arrest. We consistently urge the Pakistani authorities to investigate any such allegations thoroughly and transparently. The UK recognises that Human Rights Defenders play an essential role in promoting and protecting democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. We support the rights of Human Rights Defenders to carry out their work safely and without fear.

Pakistan remains a FCDO Human Rights Priority Country. We regularly raise at a senior level our concerns about the human rights situation with the Government of Pakistan. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon discussed our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 20 February. The UK will continue to urge the government of Pakistan to guarantee the rights of all people in Pakistan, as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

■ Myanmar: Press Freedom

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[154583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the compliance by Frontiir Co. Ltd with demands from the Government of Myanmar to block independent media in that country.

Nigel Adams:

Frontiir has helped connect over one million people in Myanmar to the internet at affordable prices, thereby increasing access to information, boosting businesses, supporting education and tackling poverty. Frontiir has at all times adhered to international best practice.

Following the military coup on February 1st, Frontiir, along with all other telco operators and internet service providers, received regulatory orders to shut down the internet for brief periods and also block certain social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook. We have strongly condemned this move. Nevertheless, Frontiir is bound by national law under its licencing agreement and is unable to go against an official government directive. Frontiir has been open and transparent about these orders, acting in accordance with the Global Network initiative agreement, including posting a statement on their website. This is in line with the approach taken by other responsible internet platforms in Myanmar. Frontiir is an observer member of the Global Network Initiative and we remain in close communication with them on the current situation. CDC is reviewing the impact of the 1st February Myanmar coup on its investments in the country.

■ Myanmar: Sanctions

Hilary Benn:

[\[154763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to introduce targeted sanctions against military business enterprises in Myanmar, in response to the military coup.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is looking at a range of measures to ensure the democratic wishes of the people of Myanmar are respected. Last week we imposed immediate asset freezes and travel bans against three members of the Myanmar military regime for their role in serious human rights violations during the coup. We will continue to work closely with international partners on next steps, this includes exploring further sanctions.

The UK has imposed sanctions on 16 individuals responsible for human rights violations in Myanmar, including the Commander in Chief and his Deputy.

■ Natalia Kaliada and Nikloai Khalezin

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[155080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to support UK citizens (a) Natalia Kaliada and (b) Nikolai Khalezin, who have reportedly been threatened by media outlets in Belarus.

Wendy Morton:

The Government condemns the intimidation and persecution of political opposition figures and activists by Lukashenko's regime. Although we have not been directly approached by the persons concerned, we are aware of certain articles in a Belarusian state owned newspaper. These articles have made false claims about our Embassy in Minsk and made threats towards British nationals in the UK, who have spoken out against Lukashenko's regime. We have raised our concerns about this newspaper directly with the Belarusian authorities and to the Belarusian Ambassador in London. Any person in the UK who believes they are at risk are able to contact their local police in the UK.

■ **Nawaf al-Osaimi****Mr Alistair Carmichael:**[\[154828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) make representations to the Government of Saudi Arabia on halting the execution of Nawaf al-Osaimi for crimes committed as a teenager and (b) urge the Government of Saudi Arabia to undertake an independent review of its death row population to identify people on death row for childhood crimes and ensure that no other child defendants face execution.

James Cleverly:

The UK strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. This is especially the case for juveniles. This is in line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights. We reiterated our opposition to the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September.

We regularly raise our concerns about the use of the death penalty, including individual cases with the Saudi Arabian authorities and we will continue to do so. In August, our Chargé d'affaires in Riyadh raised the issue of the death penalty with Minister of State Al Jubeir. I raised the death penalty with Dr Awwad al Awwad, President of Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission during his virtual visit in July.

■ **Overseas Aid****Dan Carden:**[\[155347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect in the reduction in Official Development Assistance to developing countries on (a) family planning, (b) sexual and reproductive, (c) climate change, (d) poverty eradication, (e) tackling disease and (f) conflict in those countries.

Nigel Adams:

We remain firmly committed to helping the world's poorest people. The Foreign Secretary has set out seven core priorities for the UK's aid budget this year 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. This new strategic approach will allow us to drive greater impact from our aid budget, notwithstanding the difficult financial position we face.

Dan Carden:

[\[155348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance on the (a) Sustainable Development Goal of universal access to family planning and sexual health and reproduction services and (b) women and girls lives in the Global South.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is proud to champion comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning; these are fundamental to the empowerment of girls and women. Advancing gender equality and women's rights are a core part of the UK Government's work on development, including enabling girls to fulfil 12 years of quality education.

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. The aim is to ensure UK ODA is focused on strategic priorities, where it will have the maximum impact, enable greater coherence and deliver the most value for money. Officials are now working through the implications of these allocations. No decisions on individual sectoral budgets have been taken yet by Ministers.

■ Overseas Aid: Fossil Fuels

Sarah Champion:

[\[153262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made on the effect the (a) CDC and (b) Private Infrastructure Development Group investment strategies on the delivery of the Government's policy to end fossil projects overseas.

James Duddridge:

The Prime Minister announced at the Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December 2020 that the Government will no longer provide any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, with very limited exemptions. The policies of both CDC and PIDG are well aligned to the delivery of the Government's policy to end fossil fuel investment overseas.

■ Sri Lanka: Minority Groups

Patrick Grady:

[\[154604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterparts in Sri Lanka on the protection of marginalised Tamil and Muslim people in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has long supported efforts to promote peace and reconciliation for all communities in Sri Lanka, and made clear our concern about the marginalisation of minority groups in a statement delivered on behalf of the Core Group on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in June 2020.

The Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has raised the importance of protecting the rights of all communities including minority groups on several occasions with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, most recently during calls on 9 February and 22 January respectively. We will continue to engage with the Government of Sri Lanka to underline the importance we attach to this issue.

The UK and Core Group have tabled a new resolution on Sri Lanka which signals the international community's continued commitment to reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. The new resolution will call on the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the human rights of people in all of its communities are protected.

Patrick Grady:[\[154612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Sri Lankan counterpart on the rights of minority groups to lawful peaceful protest in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The right to peaceful assembly is a vital part of a democratic society. The UK Government is aware of the recent demonstrations that took place in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, and are concerned at reports of threatening behaviour experienced by some demonstrators. Officials from the British High Commission in Colombo will continue to monitor the events closely.

■ Sub-Saharan Africa: Coronavirus**Stephen Doughty:**[\[154571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many officials in his Department that are (a) based in and (b) travelling to and from countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are on the red list have been vaccinated against covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO and MOD are working together to deliver supplies of Covid-19 vaccine to posts in Africa and elsewhere in the world from the end of February. This distribution will be aligned to the UK national programme for staff and dependants for whom HMG has duty of care. FCDO staff based in the UK have access to the NHS vaccination programme in the same way as everyone else.

■ Sultana Khaya

Navendu Mishra: [\[155443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will instruct HM Ambassador to Morocco to raise with the Moroccan authorities the throwing of stones at the Saharawi human rights defender Sultana Khaya by police.

Navendu Mishra: [\[155444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will hold discussions with the Moroccan Ambassador on the opinion of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention calling for the immediate release of the Saharawi journalist, Walid Salek El Batal.

Navendu Mishra: [\[155445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will ask the Ambassador to Morocco to (a) make representations to the Moroccan authorities on the disappearance and death of Muhammed Salem Ayyad Al Fahim and (b) request that a medical autopsy is undertaken by those authorities.

James Cleverly:

Support for human rights is a priority around the world, and we raise human rights issues with the Moroccan Government accordingly. We note the opinion of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on Walid Salek El Batal.

■ Uganda: Human Rights

Mrs Pauline Latham: [\[155006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2021 to Question 149769 on Uganda: Overseas Aid, what representations he had made to his Ugandan counterpart on alleged human rights abuses by the Ugandan security services since the Ugandan general election on 14 January 2021; and what steps his Department is taking to support (a) human rights, (b) democracy and (c) the rule of law in that country.

James Duddridge:

Following the Presidential election results on 16 January 2021, I set out, in a statement, our significant concerns about the overall political climate surrounding the elections and have urged the Government of Uganda to meet its international human rights commitments. The treatment of opposition candidates and their supporters since the Ugandan elections is concerning and does not provide for an open political landscape for democracy to flourish. Following the unacceptable constraints placed on the opposition candidate, Robert Kyagulanyi, the British High Commission in Kampala pressed the Ugandan authorities to remove restrictions on his political freedoms prior to the lifting of his de facto house arrest on 25 January. The recent violence towards journalists on 17 February was unacceptable and we welcomed the commitment of the Chief of Defence Forces to investigate the matter and take appropriate action. Our High Commissioner continues to engage with political leaders

across all parties to discuss these issues and push for democratic engagement and reform.

The UK Government supports programmes for civil society groups and organisations in Uganda that promote democracy, robust institutions, and transparent elections. We have worked with Uganda over a number of years, helping to strengthen institutions in Uganda to uphold democratic freedoms and advocate for the equal treatment of all Ugandans according to the terms of the Ugandan constitution and laws. As a long-standing partner to Uganda, the UK will continue to follow post-election developments closely, and engage with the Ugandan Government and Ugandans to advocate for democracy.

■ **Westminster Foundation for Democracy: Finance**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[155295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147949, on Westminster Foundation for Democracy, when decisions on individual budgets will be taken by Ministers.

Nigel Adams:

Ministers are in the process of making final decisions on FCDO's funding for financial year 2021/22, including funding to Westminster Foundation for Democracy. I will revert back to Parliament once decisions have been taken.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Accident and Emergency Departments: Overcrowding**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[154829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce crowding in NHS emergency departments during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

The Government provided an additional £450 million capital funding to expand capacity and upgrade accident and emergency facilities, helping to reduce overcrowding this winter and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding was awarded to over 120 trusts and over 190 urgent treatment sites.

An improved NHS 111 service was also introduced, acting as the first point of contact for accessing urgent medical care. This ensures that patients get the right care and avoid unnecessary visits to emergency departments. Systems were asked to maximise use of 'Hear and Treat' and 'See and Treat' pathways for 999 demand, to support a sustained reduction in the number of patients conveyed to type 1 or 2 emergency departments.

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Rehabilitation

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[151652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to statistics on alcohol and drug treatment in secure settings 2019 to 2020, published on 28 January 2021, what plans he has to increase the proportions of (a) adults and (b) young people starting substance misuse treatment in the community following release from a secure setting.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[151654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Alcohol and drug treatment in secure settings 2019 to 2020: report, published on 28 January 2021, what plans he has to reduce regional inequalities in the proportion of adults with a substance misuse treatment need who successfully engage in community-based structured treatment following release from prison.

Jo Churchill:

The Government recently announced an additional £80 million of funding in 2021/22 to enhance drug treatment services, including increasing the number of treatment places for prison leavers and offenders across England. This will improve access to community treatment for adults and young people following their release from a secure setting.

In addition, the NHS Long Term Plan introduced a new RECONNECT service which works with people before they leave prison and helps them to make the transition to community-based services. Of the new £80 million funding, £2.5 million will be invested in an enhanced RECONNECT service. This will support offenders with complex needs to engage with and get the right treatment from substance misuse and other services, for up to a year after release. The enhanced service will target those aged 18 to 24 years old.

■ Aviation: Quarantine

Maria Eagle:

[\[148714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he had with airline and airport representatives prior to the announcement of a policy of hotel based covid-19 quarantine from certain destinations in order to mitigate the effect of that policy on the viability of regional airports.

Jo Churchill:

Over the few past weeks, Government Ministers and officials have engaged with stakeholders from across the aviation, maritime, hotel and hospitality industries and are finalising plans to implement the new scheme.

■ Blood Cancer: Health Services

Henry Smith: [\[86638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Long Term Plan, when the national Quality of Life metric will be implemented to better support people living with blood cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The Quality of Life Metric survey will help us better support people, including blood cancer patients, living with and beyond cancer. The survey, launched in September 2020, will initially be sent to people with breast, prostate and colorectal cancer. All other cancers will be included from 2021.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Kim Johnson: [\[148946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking in response to the fall below the national minimum standard of 70 percent in the proportion of women taking up their breast screening invitation within six months before the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England (PHE) are committed to the recovery and improvement of screening uptake for all programmes, including breast screening. Breast screening providers are encouraged to work with cancer alliances, primary care networks, NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams and local authorities to promote uptake and take action to ensure as many people as possible can access services. Measures include text messaging to remind women about their breast screening invitation and encourage them to attend and the provision of information such as the PHE-developed 'Breast Screening: Easy Guide' so that women can decide whether screening is right for them. The National Health Service 'Help Us Help You' campaign has also been run to encourage the public to continue to access cancer services, including routine appointments such as breast screening.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[152552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his long-term strategy to tackle the 30,000 missing diagnoses outlined in the Government's Cancer Services Recovery Plan beyond March 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Significant work has gone into encouraging people to come forward with the aim of restoring demand to at least pre-pandemic levels through running major public awareness campaigns, ensuring efficient routes into the National Health Service for people at risk of cancer, including through supporting restoration of screening

programmes and by improving referral management practice in primary and secondary care.

After March, local systems will be expected to carry out local plans formed as part of the Cancer Services Recovery Plan and carry on with the progress that has already been made. The NHS Long Term Plan ambitions and actions for cancer remain the ultimate goal – to diagnose 75% of cancers at stage 1 or 2 and for 55,000 more people to survive five years or more by 2028.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[149239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) Royal College of Nursing and (b) other relevant bodies on the use of artificial intelligence technology to identify tumours and speed up the treatment of cancer.

Jo Churchill:

Artificial intelligence (AI) has an important role to play in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. We supported the AI in Health and Care Award, which is part of the NHS AI Lab and run by the Accelerated Access Collaborative in partnership with NHSX and the National Institute for Health Research. This resulted in a collaboration with a number of partners, including the Royal Colleges, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, Public Health England, medical research charities and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in the selection and identification of AI technologies for use in the treatment of cancer. Cancer solutions are one of the priority clinical areas for the second round of the AI in Health and Care Award, with winners to be announced in May 2021.

Felicity Buchan:

[\[151885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the success of the Cancer Recovery Plan for services in London; and what further steps he plans to take to mitigate the disparity in cancer related health outcomes for different communities in London beyond March 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: The Cancer Services Recovery Plan, published in December 2020, aims to restore urgent referrals at least to pre-pandemic levels, to reduce the number of people waiting over 62 days from urgent referral and ensure sufficient capacity to meet demand.

The latest data from December shows that in London:

- 30,236 people were referred on the urgent two week wait pathway in December 2020, 4% more than in December 2019;
- 2,690 people started a first treatment for cancer in December, 7% more than in December 2019, and 96.9% of those people did so within 31 days; and
- Of those, 1,502 people started treatment via the urgent pathway, 12% more than in December 2019.

Through the NHS Long Term Plan, the NHS Cancer Programme is committed to improve access to treatments for all cancer patients and reduce health inequalities. Cancer Alliances are working with local sustainability and transformation partnerships and integrated care systems to reduce variation on patient outcomes and experience.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[155078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the additional £1 billion allocated in the 2020 November Spending Review to tackle waiting lists will be allocated to tackling the cancer backlog.

Jo Churchill:

Arrangements for distributing the £1 billion funding, announced in the recent Spending Review, are still under consideration as the National Health Service continues to work through the current COVID-19 surge. In addition, the review also confirmed that there will be £325 million of new investment in NHS diagnostics equipment to improve clinical outcomes.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[155037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients that have been asked to reduce their cancer treatment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Information is not available in the format requested.

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[155038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data NHS trusts are collecting on interruptions to cancer treatment for existing patients during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Multi-disciplinary teams use patient tracking lists to ensure patients receive timely treatment and NHS England and NHS Improvement use a variety of data sources to calculate the number of patients waiting longer than a certain period for treatments, as well as informing action to reduce these numbers. This data includes published cancer waiting times data on activity, referrals and waiting times, as well as management information which can give a week to week view of activity and the current scale of the waiting list. Any decision to reschedule cancer surgery will be a last resort and patients will be given the dates for their new treatment at the earliest opportunity.

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[155039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to help prevent cancer patients from experiencing delays in their treatment in the event that pressures on hospitals due to the covid-19 outbreak increase in the future.

Jo Churchill:

The key aims of the Cancer Recovery Plan is to restore urgent referrals at least to pre-pandemic levels, to reduce the number of people waiting over 62 days from urgent referral. By ensuring sufficient capacity to meet demand and re-establishing COVID-19 secure cancer hubs and consolidating cancer surgery, prioritising people for surgery centrally on the basis of clinical need and drawing on the independent sector (IS) to increase capacity, urgent cancer surgery patients are the first priority for accessing IS services.

■ Carers: Mental Health**Gill Furniss:**[\[152597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the mental wellbeing of young carers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: During the pandemic the Government has provided over £11 million to the See, Hear, Respond programme, to support vulnerable children and young people whose usual support networks have been impacted by the outbreak, including young carers as a target group. The programme provides a range of support, including online counselling and helping children and young people stay connected with school.

■ Coronavirus: Batley and Spen**Tracy Brabin:**[\[99701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 tests were carried out in Batley and Spen constituency on each of the last 14 days.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The information is not held in the format requested as data is not collected at constituency level.

■ Coronavirus: Disability**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[153163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to finding by the Office of National Statistics that 60 per cent of deaths involving covid-19 between 24 January and 20 November 2020 were disabled people, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that disabled people are protected from covid-19 in the future.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: The most recent monthly data from Skills for Care indicates that the vacancy rate of directly employed staff in social care has reduced to 6.9% in January 2021 from 8.0% in February 2020.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Bill Esterson:**[\[102776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the household bubble policy on the spread of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government uses a range of data to assess the level of public understanding on COVID-19 policies and has simplified COVID-19 rules to make them easier for the public to understand. Changes such as the 'rule of six' and the Local COVID Alert Levels mean that people should know what they can and cannot do at each level of lockdown. We continually work with a range of stakeholders and digital colleagues to ensure guidance is created in an easy to understand and accessible format.

Guidance on support bubbles have stressed that support bubbles must be exclusive to avoid chains of transmission and those that are at higher risk of exposure or are clinically vulnerable have been advised to take particular care when deciding whether to form a support bubble. This targeted policy is aimed at assisting the most isolated in society while restricting the negative effect on transmission.

Sir Mike Penning:[\[154861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 lockdown on young couples that live apart with their respective parents; and if he will permit the formation of relationship bubbles to enable those couples to meet.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Under the current restrictions a couple who live apart can only form a support bubble if they fulfil the eligibility criteria. We recognise that not everyone who would like to form a support bubble will be able to do so. This is because the formation of a support bubble and therefore the ability to have close contact with those you do not live with, carries transmission risks. As such the eligibility criteria is necessarily limited to smaller households most in need of support that cannot be facilitated by other means and in other settings.

We continue to keep the eligibility criteria under review.

Emma Hardy:[\[86146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) information he holds on and (b) assessment he has made of the effect on the risk of transmission of covid-19 for clinically vulnerable people of those people living in households with children attending school.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: The shielding guidance on GOV.UK applies to clinically extremely vulnerable individuals only. Clinically vulnerable people should follow the general advice and regulations set out in the national lockdown guidance that came into effect on 5 January 2021.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitals

Sir Mike Penning:

[152430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish statistics on the number of (a) staff, (b) patients and (c) visitors who are believed to have contracted covid-19 in hospital.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Given the incubation period of the virus and local differences in application of testing protocols, it is not possible to definitively determine the number of people who contracted the virus while in hospital in England state or the number of nosocomial infections amongst National Health Service staff and how many have been infected through contacts outside the NHS. NHS England and NHS Improvement do not hold any data on visitors infected.

Since October 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement has published data on COVID-19 hospital activity from 1 August including the numbers of people diagnosed in, or admitted to, hospital with COVID-19. NHS England and NHS Improvement also collect data the time between admission to hospital and first positive swab for COVID-19 and the number of patients admitted to hospital after a diagnosis in the community or diagnosed within eight days after admission.

■ Coronavirus: Liverpool

Conor McGinn:

[126068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of mass covid-19 testing in Liverpool; and if he will publish the data that supports that assessment.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 10 December 2020]: The Government published the 'Liverpool COVID-19 community testing pilot: interim evaluation report summary' which is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/liverpool-covid-19-community-testing-pilot-interim-evaluation-report-summary/liverpool-covid-19-community-testing-pilot-interim-evaluation-report-summary> The report evaluates the data on the biological, behavioural and systems aspects of the pilot and its early public health impacts. A final assessment and a more detailed report on the effectiveness of mass testing and the data to support will follow later in 2021.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon:

[150801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had experts on the use of covid-19 blood plasma to help treat people with covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Convalescent plasma was trialled as a treatment for COVID-19 in hospitalised patients in the RECOVERY and REMAP-CAP trial platforms in the United Kingdom.

The interim analysis from both trials on 7 January 2021 revealed no benefit of convalescent plasma for patients with severe disease including patients requiring mechanical ventilation and organ support.

The RECOVERY trial closed recruitment on 15 January and reported no overall mortality benefit for other hospitalised patients. However, both trials are continuing to analyse the data, as it is possible that convalescent plasma could provide clinical benefit for specific sub-groups of patients.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[151860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the guidance on face coverings for people working in food preparation environments following recent ONS findings that they are more at risk of contracting covid-19 in their place of employment.

Jo Churchill:

Employers and businesses have existing legal obligations to manage workplace health and safety risks through the Health and Safety at Work Act and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. In addition, The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has provided detailed guidance on working safely during the pandemic for specific workplace settings. Employers must complete an assessment of the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace, using the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's guidance to inform decisions and identify control measures to manage that risk.

These measures, including social distancing and increased surface cleaning, remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace. Should workers choose to wear face coverings in addition to the more vital measures, their employer should support them in this.

It is mandatory for workers to wear a face covering in an array of indoor areas which are open to the public and where they come or are likely to come within close contact of a member of the public, to limit the risk of transmission as the public move around and to protect both staff and customers. We will be keeping the situation and the evidence under review and will take further action if needed.

■ **Coronavirus: Public Houses**

Olivia Blake:

[\[155486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the public health justification is for the restriction on pubs selling alcohol to takeaway during the covid-19 lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Allowing people to take alcohol purchases away from hospitality venues increases the risk that people will consume the alcohol nearby or congregate in public spaces. This potentially results in a higher risk of transmission, as the Scientific Advisory

Group for Emergencies' advice has highlighted that alcohol consumption may increase risk of non-compliance with social distancing. Pubs and business are still able to sell alcohol as part of a delivery service if allowed under their licence conditions. The Government keeps all rules, including the hospitality restrictions under continual review and will make changes as and when the data and science supports it.

■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

Naz Shah:

[110148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason his Department's guidance does not require people who self-isolate for 14 days to take a covid-19 test once that period has concluded.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: Decisions on the need to take COVID-19 tests are based on scientific evidence, the stage of the epidemic and the expert clinical judgement of the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers. Current evidence has not identified a need to take a COVID-19 test once a self-isolation period has concluded. We constantly review the data and make changes when we are confident it is appropriate to do so.

■ **Coronavirus: Research**

Olivia Blake:

[155485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2020 to Question 70532, on Coronavirus: Research, and evidence that long covid affects patients that were not hospitalised and in some cases had milder symptoms, if he will make it his policy to fund new schemes to focus on patients with long covid and resultant cardiac, endocrine and neurological issues.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

On 18 February, this Government announced that through the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research Innovation, we have awarded £18.5 million in funding for four research projects to help understand and address the longer-term health effects of COVID-19 in non-hospitalised patients.

These studies will work with people living with ongoing symptoms and issues for more than four weeks post-COVID-19 infection to improve understanding and treatment of 'long' COVID-19. We are at an early stage in developing world-class understanding, treatment and care for those people experiencing 'long' COVID-19 and research funders will continue to consider proposals.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Daisy Cooper:

[139143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will extend access to home covid-19 testing kits to (a) employees of nurseries in the (i) private, (ii) voluntary and (iii) independent sectors, (b) employees of pre-schools and (c) childminders.

Helen Whately:

Anyone with symptoms can get a COVID-19 home test. Education and childcare workers are considered essential workers. Essential workers can order four tests for themselves and other symptomatic members of their households. For households of more than four people, the Test and Trace Contact Centre can raise an order on someone's behalf. Local authorities are encouraged to target testing at people who are unable to work from home during the national lockdown including education and childcare workers.

James Murray:

[155436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to surge testing for the South African variant of covid-19 which commenced on 1 February 2021, how many tests have been distributed; and what proportion of those tests were (a) not returned, (b) returned unopened and (c) returned spoiled in (i) EN10, (ii) W7, (iii) N17, (iv) CR4, (v) PR9, (vi) ME15, (vii) GU21 and (viii) WS2 areas and in each (A) postcode and (B) postcode sector in those areas.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the information in the format requested. All polymerase chain reaction test results in surge testing regions are included in the weekly statistics published by Public Health England on the number of confirmed COVID-19 test results, which is available at the following link:

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

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Dame Diana Johnson:

[150718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of care home (a) residents and (b) staff have (i) been offered each vaccine dose and (ii) refused the vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 February 2021]: We are working with the vaccination programme in NHS England to monitor progress. NHS England now publishes 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/>

Data on vaccine refusals is not collected.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[154811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the priority given to unpaid carers as part of the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We recognise the vital role unpaid carers play in caring for vulnerable individuals. Since the 15 February general practitioners and other primary care professionals have been asked to invite those eligible for vaccination within cohort six to attend an appointment for vaccination. This cohort includes unpaid carers that care for those vulnerable to COVID-19.

We are developing bespoke guidance for this group, set out in a Standard Operating Protocol which has been developed in close cooperation with carers organisations and local authorities. This will be published in due course.

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

Hilary Benn:

[\[154761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Questions 133711, 133713 and 133715 tabled by the hon. Member for Leeds Central on 6 January 2021.

Edward Argar:

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

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

Stephen Morgan:

[\[156539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 143891 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, tabled on 26 January 2021 by the hon. Member for Portsmouth South.

Jo Churchill:

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

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

■ Drugs: Rehabilitation

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to NHS inpatient detoxification units in England to tackle rising numbers of drug-related deaths.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing the Government's approach to allocating funding to inpatient detoxification units in England.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to NHS inpatient detoxification units in England to tackle the rising numbers of drug-related deaths in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

Local authorities are responsible for assessing local need and commissioning alcohol and drug treatment services to meet these needs, including inpatient detoxification. The Government has recently announced an additional £80 million to fund drug treatment in 2021/22, a portion of which will be allocated to expanding inpatient detoxification. This treatment intervention has a strong evidence base for inclusion in drug and alcohol treatment programmes. All local areas will be able to benefit from this funding. We expect the expansion of detoxification provision to contribute to a reduction in drug-related deaths in England. This funding is in addition to the money local authorities already spend on substance misuse from the public health grant. Local authority spending through the public health grant will be maintained in the next financial year, meaning local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential frontline health services. Health is a devolved matter in the United Kingdom and the devolved administrations have their own policies and programmes in place to address substance misuse.

■ Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome: Health Services

Alexander Stafford: [\[151896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the Ehlers-Danlos syndromes (EDS) toolkit for GPs and healthcare professionals on the recognition, response to and management of EDS in primary care.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

Alexander Stafford: [\[151897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Royal College of General Practitioner's decision to announce their intention to remove the

Ehlers-Danlos syndromes (EDS) toolkit for GPs from their website, if he will work with EDS UK to facilitate a review of the toolkit and agree its future location.

Jo Churchill:

The Government published the new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework in January 2021 which outlines the key priorities for rare diseases in the UK over the next five years. One priority area, as identified through the 'national conversation' on rare diseases, is to further increase awareness of rare diseases such as Ehlers-Danlos syndromes (EDS) amongst health professionals. Development of nation-specific action plans for how each of the four UK nations will deliver on these priorities will begin in 2021 and will involve further engagement with the rare disease community. The use of online toolkits will be considered while working towards this priority.

■ **General Practitioners**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[148885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2021 to Question 140237 on General Practitioners, what format that information is available in.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[148886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2021 to Question 140237 on General Practitioners, what plans he has to publish the information requested in that Question in the format so requested.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Digital publishes 'Appointments in General Practice' data which cannot be used to measure waiting times in general practice. The 'time from booking to appointment' refers only to the time elapsed between the successful booking of an appointment and the appointment taking place. The data does not take into consideration that many patients will be appropriately booking ahead as part of the continuity of care they receive for long-term conditions. This is an experimental data collection which is still being refined and improved.

Data showing the time between booking an appointment with a general practice and the appointment taking place for practices is published at national, regional, sustainability and transformation partnership and clinical commissioning group level.

■ **General Practitioners: Standards**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[148887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2021 to Question 140237 on General Practitioners, what recent steps he has taken to support GPs to reduce appointment waiting times.

Jo Churchill:

We will create an extra 50 million appointments in general practice a year and increase the workforce by 6,000 more doctors and 26,000 more primary care professionals, such as physiotherapists, social prescribers and pharmacists. NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England are working together with the profession to boost recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice.

This will mean bigger teams of staff providing a wider range of care options for patients and will free up more time for doctors to focus on those with more complex needs. Appointment numbers have risen from 16.6 million in April 2020 to 24 million in December 2020.

■ Globus Group: Coronavirus

Fleur Anderson: [154611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the attendees at negotiations for the contracts awarded to Globus to help deliver the Government's covid-19 response.

Fleur Anderson: [155418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total value of contracts awarded to Globus in 2020 was to help the Government's response to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 February 2021]: All offers of personal protective equipment (PPE) from suppliers received the same eight stage assurance process which selected suppliers based on the product type, clinical acceptability, price, forecasted delivery dates, volume and financial standing. This was managed by a team of around 450 officials from a number of Government Departments, who conducted the negotiations.

The value of the contract awarded to Globus for the supply of PPE was £93.7 million. The Contract Award Notice and contract have been published at the following link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/c0a249e7-5453-40f2-b047-bb5da9a1941b?origin=SearchResults&p=1>

■ Health Services: Children

Derek Twigg: [154772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer of 17 February 2021 to Question 146788, on Health Services: Children, if he will publish that data in the format held by his Department.

Edward Argar:

Collection of data for cancelled operations was paused in April 2020. When it is collected it does not differentiate between adult and children's operations.

■ Health Services: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[152479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward policy proposals to prioritise operations for people at risk of losing their employment on health grounds as a result of delays in receiving medical care during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: Treatment is prioritised based first on clinical need and then on the length of time that a patient has been waiting. There are no plans at this time to prioritise operations for people at risk of losing their employment on health grounds.

■ Health Services: Police

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[151735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2021 to Question 141498 on Health Services: Police, whether he plans to issue guidance on the reopening of police treatment centres.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[151736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria the Government used to determine which (a) professions and (b) services would be allowed to operate during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021; and for what reason Police Treatment Centres were excluded from that list.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: The Department has no plans to issue guidance to specific charities such as Police Treatment Centres on reopening decisions. It is for each individual setting to update their own risk assessment based on legislation and guidance published by the Government.

The latest national restrictions were introduced to reduce transmission and control the virus. We recognise the importance of people being able to continue to receive urgent treatment and personal care services provided for essential medical and health needs, which cannot be deferred, have been able to continue. Guidance on the types of treatment which can continue has also been published providing clarity to businesses, charities such as Police Treatment Centres, and the public.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Jon Trickett:

[\[151617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many delayed discharges from hospital there were in Yorkshire and the Humber region in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: Data from January 2020 to February 2020 and from August 2010 to December 2010 is not available in the format requested.

Due to COVID-19 and the need to release capacity across the National Health Service to support the response, NHS England and NHS Improvement have suspended the collection and publication of some of the official statistics. This includes data for delayed discharges which has not been collected since February 2020.

■ Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis: Drugs

Lee Rowley:

[\[151821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using pirfenidone and nintedanib for the treatment of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF).

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for producing evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service on whether medicines represent a clinical and cost-effective use of resources.

NICE has published guidance recommending nintedanib and pirfenidone as options for treating adults with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis if the person has a forced vital capacity between 50% and 80%. NICE is currently considering whether an update to this guidance is required and expects to inform stakeholders of the outcome early this year.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[150710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the minimum efficacy threshold is that the NHS sets when commissioning the annual seasonal flu vaccine from the presented candidates, in percentage terms, in terms of (a) preventing serious infection in people in receipt of the vaccine (i) aged 45 to 64 and (ii) aged 65 and over, (b) preventing hospitalisation of people in receipt of the vaccine (i) aged 45 to 64 and (ii) aged 65 and over and (c) preventing death from influenza of people in receipt of the vaccine (i) aged 45 to 64 and (ii) aged 65 and over; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 February 2021]: Flu vaccines are assessed for minimum efficacy thresholds at the point of licensure. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for licensing flu vaccines based on efficacy and safety results from clinical trials in the specific age groups intended for the license application.

The World Health Organization monitors flu globally and each year convenes a vaccine composition group that recommends the strains of flu virus that should be included in the licensed flu vaccines for the forthcoming flu season. The effectiveness of influenza vaccines can vary from year to year depending on a range of factors, including how well the vaccine strain is matched to circulating strains.

The Department and NHS England receive advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) about which vaccines are suitable or preferred for which age groups in the flu programme. The JCVI makes its advice from the available scientific evidence from a variety of sources including clinical and observation studies on the safety and performance of flu vaccines in the United Kingdom and globally. In advance of each flu season, NHS England publishes guidance on the vaccines that are included in the National Health Service programme, based on the JCVI's, advice alongside operational aspects, such as availability of supply and affordability.

■ Lung Diseases: Health Services

Derek Twigg:

[\[154771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many referrals to respiratory specialists were made by GPs in each (a) local authority and (b) CCG in England in each month since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

Data on the number of referrals made to respiratory specialists by general practitioners in each clinical commissioning group in England in each month since March 2020 is attached. The data represents all referrals made via e-RS, the National Health Service e-referral online booking system, from primary care to a respiratory specialist.

Data at a local authority level is not available.

Attachments:

1. Respiratory Referrals Data [PQ154771 Respiratory Referrals .xlsx]

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron:

[\[154794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 3 December 2020, 14 December 2020 and 3 February 2021 on a constituency case, reference JB30277.

Edward Argar:

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

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

■ Mental Health Services: Coronavirus**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[154864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the accessibility of mental health provision for people during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[154866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people's mental health during the covid-19 lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Mental health services have remained open for business throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing support online, by phone and face to face where appropriate. All mental health trusts have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines where people with severe needs or experiencing a mental health crisis can access support and advice and resources are available to help people with their own mental health and wellbeing through GOV.UK and Every Mind Matters.

Our Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Plan for COVID-19 sets out the support available for people who are struggling, our commitments to ensure services are there to support those who need it and the provision in place to keep frontline workers well. The Government has also invested £5 million in national loneliness charities, raising awareness and providing advice through the Let's Talk Loneliness campaign and a new Tackling Loneliness Network, to support the wellbeing of those struggling with social isolation over the pandemic.

■ Mental Health: Coronavirus**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[154865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the long-term effect of the covid-19 pandemic on mental health in the UK.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We continue to work with the National Health Service, Public Health England and others to consider the emerging evidence and what might need to be done to further support people's mental health. A cross-Government group has been established to consider and respond to the longer term impacts of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing and will set out its plans in due course.

■ Multiple Sclerosis: Coronavirus**Dr Philippa Whitford:** [\[154629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether the ability of multiple sclerosis (MS) patients to access to treatment options has been adversely affected during the covid-19 outbreak; and what plans he has to

ensure that MS patients are able to access treatment that is appropriate for (a) their disease course, (b) overall quality of life and (c) other individual needs.

Edward Argar:

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 treatments for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). For non-urgent care, remote consultations using video, telephone, email and text message services have been made available 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 conditions, including for MS treatments across their disease course, whether they are for their overall quality of life or other individual needs - for example, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy.

■ **Multiple Sclerosis: Medical Treatments**

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[155076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy of access for multiple sclerosis (MS) patients to healthcare professional support during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) potential merits of oral therapy options that can make treatment more convenient for MS patients.

Edward Argar:

No specific assessment has been made. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the NHS in England has maintained access to urgent and emergency care, including for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). For non-urgent care, providers have been rolling out remote consultations using video, telephone, email and text message services as a priority where appropriate.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline Multiple sclerosis in adults: management, updated November 2019, sets out best practice for clinicians in the treatment of MS, which includes guidance on the usage of oral and intravenous treatments for patients with relapse remitting MS.

■ **NHS and Social Services: Staff**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[153166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to create a workforce strategy for the NHS and social care.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: The Government is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England, Skills for Care and employers to determine our workforce priorities for the NHS and social care beyond April 2021 and to support recovery.

■ NHS England: Finance**Steve Brine:****[155020]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the NHS England budget was on (a) 23 June 2016 and (b) 1 January 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 24 February 2021]: At the beginning of each financial year, the Mandate sets out NHS England's total revenue resource limit and total capital resource limit which is then later revised towards the end of the same financial year for any in-year changes in funding.

For 2016-17, the total initial revenue resource limit was £106,496 million and the total capital resource limit was £305 million. This is the budget that was in effect on 23 June 2016. The totals were subsequently revised to £106,528 million for revenue and £260 million for capital.

For 2020-21 as per the opening Mandate, the total revenue resource limit is £129,681 million, including funding for pensions revaluation, and the total capital resource limit is £305 million. This is the budget that was in effect on 1 January 2021. These figures do not include additional COVID-19 support funding recently negotiated with HM Treasury through the Supplementary Estimates process and the Mandate will be revised in due course to reflect the final position.

■ NHS Test and Trace**Justin Madders:****[140831]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of calls to the covid-19 NHS Test and Trace service were (a) answered and (b) answered within 60 seconds in (i) November 2020 and (ii) December 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: In November 2020 there were 1,164,683 calls made to the Test and Trace 119 Service, with 1,145,479 calls answered and 99.8% of these answered within 60 seconds. In December 2020 there were 1,546,068 calls with 1,485,864 calls answered and 92.4% answered within 60 seconds. From 22 December 2020 60,919 calls were made with 51,626 calls answered and 97.9% answered within 60 seconds.

Chi Onwurah:**[150796]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason it is not possible to determine where covid-19 transmission occurred by the data collected by NHS Test and Trace.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 11 February 2021]: NHS Test and Trace collects data on testing and for those who test positive, further data is collected on the close contacts of the case. This includes obtaining details of the people with whom the case has had close contact, recent contacts and places visited by the case. However, this data does not

specify where the specific transmission event took place. Local Health Protection Teams and local authorities do receive common exposure alerts, providing information on cases that have been linked to specific exposure settings and use this information to investigate and manage clusters at such settings.

■ NHS: Drugs

Chris Green: [\[151738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) encourage medical innovation in blood cancers and (b) ensure access to newer targeted treatments are not restricted as a result of being compared to more toxic, low cost, chemotherapy alternatives.

Chris Green: [\[151739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) support access to medicines in therapeutic areas where there is a lack of recent innovation and the unmet need is high and (b) ensure new treatments are not penalised as a result of being compared to a low cost standard of care.

Chris Green: [\[151740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendations made by the Decision Support Unit in its 2014 Report, Assessing technologies that are not cost-effective at zero price, what steps he is taking to support access to innovative medicines in response to those recommendations.

Jo Churchill:

We reformed the Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF) in 2016 to improve patient access to promising and innovative new cancer treatments.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) appraises all new cancer drugs and is now able to recommend cancer drugs for use through the CDF where there is too much uncertainty to be able to recommend them for routine commissioning. Thousands of National Health Service patients in England have benefitted from rapid access to new cancer drugs as a result of the CDF and NICE recommended 92% of the cancer drugs it appraised in 2020.

NICE recognises its procedures need to keep pace with developments in medical innovation and is currently undertaking a review of its methods and processes. The methods review explores issues relevant to the appraisal of new cancer drugs, such as addressing uncertainty and taking account of innovation. However, it is too soon to comment on the potential outcomes and any changes to NICE's methods that may be implemented.

■ Nurses: Vacancies

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[153164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to fill nursing vacancies in the NHS.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: We have set up a comprehensive work programme to improve retention and support return to practice, invest in and diversify our training pipeline and ethically recruit internationally. The number of nurses has increased by almost 11,100 (3.8%), between November 2019 and November 2020.

In September 2020, we introduced a new funding package of at least £5,000 per annum available to all eligible pre-registration nursing students at an English university. Health Education England is also continuing to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement on the 'We are the NHS' campaign which aims to increase applications for both degree courses and direct entry jobs.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Databases**Rosie Cooper:**[\[141942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS Trusts providing eyecare services routinely submit data to the National Ophthalmology Database; and if he will amend the NHS Mandate to require that all relevant Trusts submit to that database.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 27 January 2021]: Of the 118 eligible National Health Service trusts in England and Wales, 73 NHS trusts in England and four Welsh Local Health Boards submitted data to the National Ophthalmology Audit Database (NOD) between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019, the time period for which data is currently available. This is in addition to 23 independent treatment centre sites and one centre in Guernsey. All eligible trusts are encouraged to submit data to the NOD but there are no plans to make this mandatory.

The NOD is managed by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists. NHS England and NHS Improvement work closely with the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and NHS Digital to support the collection and utilisation of healthcare data to improve patient safety and quality outcomes.

Rosie Cooper:[\[141945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking in response to the Getting It Right First Time national report on ophthalmology, which concluded that there are notable gaps in the (a) collection and (b) utilisation of data by the NHS in ophthalmology.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 27 January 2021]: The Getting It Right First Time ophthalmology metrics, including information on referrals, clinical flows and clinical risks are now collated and shared on the NHS Model Health System online platform which is accessible to all trusts and local health systems. It aims to address gaps in information by collating and sharing data, including information on waiting times and waiting lists, across various specialties, including ophthalmology. This enables trusts

to benchmark their performance and agree plans to reach 'top decile' performance, supported by national and regional colleagues.

■ **P14 Medical: Coronavirus**

Alex Davies-Jones:

[155472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the attendees at negotiations for the contracts awarded to P14 Medical Limited to help deliver the Government's covid-19 response.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[155473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total value of contracts awarded to P14 Medical Limited in 2020 was to help deliver the Government's response to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 February 2021]: All offers of personal protective equipment (PPE) from suppliers received the same eight stage assurance process which selected suppliers based on the product type, clinical acceptability, price, forecasted delivery dates, volume and financial standing. Approximately 400 officials from a number of Government departments managed this process which included negotiating with suppliers.

Three contracts with a total value of £276.5 million have been awarded to P14 Medical Limited for the supply of PPE. The Contract Award Notices and contracts have been published at the following links:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/4b73ab6f-61a1-4bcc-be05-c61a036ec4ed>

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/2e4153e4-1bd2-47f2-bcce-14afa977362b>

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/990396f9-0c69-45e5-b0c2-a04c921894a6?origin=SearchResults&p=1>

■ **PPE Medpro: Coronavirus**

Rachel Reeves:

[155009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total value of contracts awarded to PPE MedPro in 2020 was to help the Government's response to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Two contracts have been awarded to PPE MedPro by the Department with a total value of £202 million.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[155476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the attendees at negotiations for the contracts awarded to PPE MedPro to help deliver the Government's covid-19 response.

Jo Churchill:

All offers of personal protective equipment from suppliers received the same eight stage assurance process which selected suppliers based on the product type, clinical acceptability, price, forecasted delivery dates, volume and financial standing.

Approximately 400 officials from a number of Government departments managed this process, which included negotiating with suppliers.

■ Prisoners' Release: General Practitioners**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[142860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the proportion of (a) women, (b) young people and (c) men leaving custody that are connected with a GP in their local area.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not held centrally. For those leaving custody, general practitioner registration should be arranged prior to release.

■ Prostate Cancer: Coffee**Jim Shannon:**[\[150800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the (a) Royal College of Nursing and (b) other bodies on the effect of coffee on the risk of prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

We have had no specific discussions.

■ Public Health: Finance**Jon Trickett:**[\[154648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the public health allocation was to each local authority in each year since 2010; and what the percentage change was between those allocations in 2010 and 2020, by local authority.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 February 2021]: In April 2013, the public health grant was transferred from the National Health Service to local authorities therefore data is only available from that financial year. A table showing the public health grant allocation for each year for each individual local authority is attached. The value of the public health grant in 2013-14 and 2014-15 is not directly comparable to subsequent years, because responsibility and funding public health services for 0-5 year olds was transferred from the NHS to local government from 1 October 2015.

Attachments:

1. Public Health Grant 2013-2020 [FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE Public Health Grant 2013-2020 - Copy.xlsx]

■ Social Services: Finance

Mark Eastwood:

[\[153412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made towards ensuring that persons needing care should not be forced to sell their home to pay for it.

Helen Whately:

We are committed to bringing forward a proposal for social care this year to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and to find long term solutions for one of the biggest challenges we face as a society. The reform of social care and its funding arrangements are complex areas and a range of options are being considered.

■ Social Services: Migrant Workers

James Wild:

[\[152664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the effect of the delay in accepting the Migration Advisory Council recommendation to include senior care workers in the Shortage Occupancy List.

Helen Whately:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has regular discussions with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on a range of matters, including immigration. The Government continues to consider the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations on the Shortage Occupations List carefully in light of recent changes to the immigration system and the economic impact of COVID-19.

It should be noted that senior care workers do not need to be on the Shortage Occupations List to qualify for the Health and Care Visa or Skilled Worker Route, so long as sponsors are offering a salary of at least £25,600, or £20,480 if they qualify as a new entrant.

■ Social Services: Vacancies

James Wild:

[\[152663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the vacancy rate in the social care sector in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Helen Whately:

The most recent monthly data from Skills for Care indicates that the vacancy rate of directly employed staff in social care has reduced to 6.9% in January 2021 from 8.0% in February 2020.

■ Surgery: Coronavirus**Stella Creasy:** [\[155024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many operations have been cancelled or delayed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, by (a) priority categorisation and (b) Trust.

Edward Argar:

The data requested is not available. The collection of data on cancelled operations has been paused due the need to release capacity across the National Health Service to support the COVID-19 response.

■ Take-away Food: Labelling**Craig Whittaker:** [\[154621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to introduce compulsory (a) calorie labelling and (b) nutritional information for foods purchased (i) from takeaway venues and (ii) via apps.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has consulted on how the policy on calorie labelling for food and drink served outside of the home by large out-of-home sector businesses, with 250 or more employees, should be enforced and is considering what the final enforcement position should be. We will introduce legislation shortly.

There are no current plans to introduce further compulsory nutrition labelling on foods purchased in the out-of-home sector.

HOME OFFICE**■ Administrative Law Independent Review****Mr David Lammy:** [\[154713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish her Department's submission to the The Independent Review of Administrative Law.

Chris Philp:

As the Lord Chancellor said when he gave evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 8 December (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/1369/default/>), the Government will publish the report of the Independent Review of Administrative Law. We will consider publication of submissions made to the Review consistent with the usual disclosure provisions.

■ Asylum: Housing

Stephen Timms:

[154684]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people claiming asylum were placed by her Department in accommodation in the London Borough of Newham in each of the last six months.

Chris Philp:

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area, which includes those in hotel and wider government facilities. These statistics can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 26 November 2020. The next quarterly figures are due to be released on 25 February 2021.

■ Biometrics: Tees Valley

Alex Cunningham:

[154628]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to extend the provision of biometric enrolment services to the Tees Valley.

Kevin Foster:

UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) centres are run by Sopra Steria Ltd (SSL) on behalf of UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI).

To determine the service points network when this service was inceptioned, SSL undertook market research to identify service locations; their research included the impact on customer travel time, cost and accessibility.

When Sopra Steria undertook this research, they found c.88% of customers would be within 25 miles of a service point. These locations are not fixed and are designed to evolve with demand through the contract term.

Where UKVCAS find there is excess demand for appointments they work to increase capacity at existing sites and open new sites in the region to ensure all customers are able to book an appointment.

Since the start of the contract, several new sites have opened to meet customer demand, including a new enhanced service point in Sunderland in July 2020 to improve appointment availability in the North East overall.

■ Electric Scooters: Pedestrian Areas

Catherine West:

[155277]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what enforcement measures her Department is planning to tackle the anti-social use of e-scooters on pavements.

Kit Malthouse:

It is illegal to use privately owned e-scooters on the roads and the pavements. How the police enforce road traffic laws is an operational matter for individual Chief Officers who will decide how to deploy available resources, taking into account any specific local problems and demands.

English Language: Education**Alex Sobel:**[\[155364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support the Government is providing to the English language teaching sector following the UK's departure from the EU.

Kevin Foster:

The Government has reformed and simplified immigration routes to ensure the English language teaching sector can recruit international students, including those from the EU.

The Visitor route now enables a student to study English at an accredited institution in the UK for up to 6 months.

The bespoke Short-term Study (English language) route is still available for longer periods of English language study. Students, aged over 16, can study an English language course for up to 11 months on this route.

Students who wish to study English for longer periods and at higher levels can use the Student route of the points-based immigration system. The Student route has been simplified and streamlined compared to the previous Tier 4 route, making it easily for students to apply to study within the UK, and significantly improving on our offer in the global marketplace.

The Government recognises the impact of COVID-19 on the English language teaching sector. A series of COVID-19 concessions have been implemented to support the education sector and international students. This includes permitting students to study remotely and ensuring students aren't penalised for circumstances outside their control.

Funerals: Coronavirus**Sir John Hayes:**[\[154746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support funeral (a) directors and (b) venue owners will receive in the event that mourners break (i) the 30-person limit and (ii) other covid-19 regulations.

Kit Malthouse:

It is the responsibility of the funeral director or venue owner to take all reasonable steps to ensure a funeral is Covid secure, and takes place in a way that complies with all relevant legislation, including around attendance.

A funeral director or venue owner can seek support from the police if they reasonably believe that the numbers attending are likely to breach the legal limits despite their best efforts to prevent this, or the numbers in attendance have unexpectedly exceeded the legal limits. The police can then decide the most appropriate action to take, which may include issuing a fixed penalty notice.

■ **Graduates: Visas**

Paul Blomfield:

[155013]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason continuous residence in the UK under a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneurship) visa does not count towards the five years continuous residency condition for indefinite leave to remain.

Kevin Foster:

Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) was a temporary route designed to enable graduates to bridge the gap between studies and the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur)/ Innovator routes.

As a temporary route it did not lead to settlement and any time spent on this route would only contribute to meeting a continuous requirement under the provision for long term residents.

Individuals on the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route are able to switch into either the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) or Innovator routes at any point during their permission and start their journey to settlement.

■ **Immigration: EU Nationals**

David Simmonds:

[155502]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the EU Settlement Scheme, what her Department's outreach and engagement strategy is to ensure (a) care workers and (b) other key workers from the EU in sectors with low pay and precarious employment arrangements are (i) reached, (ii) made aware of the scheme, and (iii) supported to apply.

Kevin Foster:

Over five million applications have been made to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), and over 4.5 million grants of status have been made, delivering on the government's promise to secure the rights of millions of Europeans in UK law for years to come.

A comprehensive range of communications activity has been delivered to date to increase awareness of the EUSS across sectors and audience demographics including EEA and Swiss national key workers and those working in the social care sector.

Communications activity includes extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, a refresh of EUSS promotional materials, and an extensive new wave of targeted UK advertising on social media, website banners, catch up TV and radio, launched earlier this month, to ensure EEA and Swiss citizens are aware of the scheme and supported to apply.

To support applicants the Home Office has provided up to £17million in grant funding to a network of 72 organisations that provide bespoke support to vulnerable and hard to reach EU citizens and their family members eligible to apply to EUSS. We recently announced a further £4.5 million of funding to the 72 organisations to continue the support services beyond the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Communications to reach eligible workers via their employer have been ongoing since the scheme's launch with hundreds of engagement events delivered alongside the provision of an employer toolkit, equipping organisations with the information required to support their staff. This has included a bespoke event for NHS employers, and with a number of regional strategic migration and enterprise partnerships.

NHS employers, Scottish Social services and Wales Social care also sit on EUSS advisory groups.

Workers in the social care sector were given early access under the pilot phases of the scheme and we have provided extensive outreach and support to the sector. We continue to work closely with the Department for Health and Social Care, and Local Authorities to provide support and materials to eligible individuals working in the sector.

■ Migrants: Finance

Jessica Morden:

[\[154874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the processing times are for the removal of the no recourse to public funds condition in migrants' visas for applicants who have lost their jobs as a result of the covid-19 pandemic and are experiencing severe financial hardship.

Chris Philp:

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply, for free, to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances.

The Home Office does not hold data on the processing times for the removal of the no recourse to public funds condition in migrants' visas for applicants who have lost their jobs as a result of the covid-19 pandemic and are experiencing severe financial hardship. Data published covers all change of conditions applications, regardless of the reason the application has needed to be made.

Change of conditions decisions are being prioritised and are being dealt with compassionately. Data published in November 2020 shows that 85% of change of conditions applications have been granted and the average time taken to make a decision is now 17 days, down from 45 days in the previous quarter. Against a backdrop of a huge increase in change of conditions applications there has been a significant drop in processing times.

■ Terrorism: Iran

Theresa Villiers:

[154848]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the recent conviction in Belgium of the Iranian diplomat, Assadollah Assadi, for terrorism offences, if she will take steps with her European counterparts to facilitate cooperation between law enforcement bodies in different countries to investigate whether other Iranian diplomats and embassies are involved in terrorism.

Kit Malthouse:

The safety and security of our citizens is the Government's top priority. We will continue to work closely with our international partners to protect the UK and our interests from any Iran-based threats.

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes a deal on law enforcement and criminal justice cooperation which delivers a comprehensive package of capabilities that will ensure we can work with counterparts across Europe to tackle serious crime and terrorism – protecting the public and bringing criminals to justice.

We remain committed to working together with European partners to counter the threats we all face, within Europe and beyond.

Specific investigations and prosecutions are a matter for the independent law enforcement agencies and prosecutors concerned. We do not comment on specific cases.

■ Visas: Applications

Alison Thewliss:

[154550]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's correspondence, reference CTS B2731/11 advising that applications are being processed in date order, how many different queues UKVI is operating; what the length was of each of those queues as of 19 February 2021; and on what date the applications that have been outstanding the longest were submitted.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is committed to ensuring that all applications are considered without unnecessary delay. Information on our immigration routes with service standards and whether they have been processed against these standards is available as part of our transparency data, at: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data).

If an application is deemed complex and expected to take longer than the standard processing timescale, UKVI will write to the customer within the standard processing time and explain what will happen next. The published information on processing times for complex/ non straightforward visa applications is published as part of the Migration Transparency data, available at [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data).

All asylum claims are carefully considered on their individual merits on the evidence available to the decision maker. We are committed to ensuring that asylum claims are

considered without unnecessary delay, so that those who need protection are granted as soon as possible. Although we concentrate on oldest cases there may be reasons where some applications may be prioritised due to a number of factors such as vulnerability. Delays may also occur where we require further information/investigations before a decision can be made on the application.

■ **Visas: EU Countries**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[155308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to expand the Tier 5 visa scheme to include European countries.

Kevin Foster:

Following the end of free movement, as part of the new single global points immigration system, EU, EEA, and Swiss citizens, alongside nationals of all other European countries, are able to benefit from the full range of core T5 (Temporary Worker) routes.

Whilst the Hon Member is not clear which of the routes under Tier 5 he is actually referring to, it might from the wording be the T5 (Temporary Worker) Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS). This is a cultural exchange programme, allowing young people aged 18 to 30 from participating countries and territories to experience life in the UK for up to two years. It currently includes one European Country, San Marino, following a bilateral agreement between our two nations.

Each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK nationals. The Home Office will not add nations to the scheme unilaterally in the absence of such an agreement. We do however, remain open to concluding further agreements on this reciprocal basis, including with European countries.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ **John Bercow**

Andrew Bridgen:

[\[155036\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the Commission holds details of the pension entitlements for former Speaker John Bercow.

Pete Wishart:

The Commission does not hold details of the pension entitlement of former Speaker John Bercow.

Pension entitlements in relation to a Member's service as an MP, Minister or Office Holder are held by the Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF).

The pension entitlement available for MPs under the PCPF is set out in a House of Commons Library briefing note available at: [MPs' Pension Scheme - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/mps-pension-scheme/)

The annual pension entitlements for Ministers and Office Holders and the separate arrangement for former Speakers are set out in a House of Commons Library briefing note available at: [Pensions of ministers and senior office holders - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/pensions-of-ministers-and-senior-office-holders/)

Pension entitlement in respect of service as a former Speaker prior to the Public Service Pension Act 2013 are paid from the Consolidated Fund. Details of these pension payments are in the Consolidated Fund accounts, available at: [CF Annual Accounts 2019-20.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91421/CF_Annual_Accounts_2019-20.pdf)

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Housing: Insulation

Mr Clive Betts:

[154551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the potential cost to leaseholders of essential non-cladding work to make buildings fire safe.

Christopher Pincher:

On 10 February, the Secretary of State announced an 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 want to go further, and through an additional package we will provide a financing scheme for the remediation of dangerous cladding 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 of £50 per month.

We are also providing £30 million in funding to pay for the costs of installing an alarm system in high rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding. Common alarm systems will enable costly waking watch measures to be replaced in buildings waiting to have unsafe cladding removed.

Section 11 of the Building Safety Bill: Impact Assessment provides estimates of the average costs per building for addressing safety remediation in high rise (18m and above) buildings. These estimates consider all necessary remediation, which goes beyond façade remediation.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[154610]

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 per leaseholder of remediating buildings between 11m 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. Costs for remediation are building-specific and can be very high, running into tens of thousands of pounds. With this scheme the Government is providing assurance that leaseholders will not pay more than £50 per month for the removal of dangerous cladding. We will be releasing further details of the finance scheme for 11-18 metres buildings.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[154613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his announcement Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention, what estimate he has made of the amount that will be raised through the Gateway 2 levy.

Christopher Pincher:

The details of the levy will be set out in due course.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[154615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans for the indemnity scheme for professionals carrying out EWS1 forms to be open.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is working to finalise the design elements of our indemnity scheme for specific competent professionals carrying out EWS1 assessments and we are rapidly testing those elements with the sector.

Further details on the scheme, including eligibility and the opening dates, will be provided. We appreciate the pressing timescales to deliver what we know is a much-needed intervention for leaseholders and freeholders in higher-risk residential buildings.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[154618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the announcement Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention, whether the maximum £50 per month leaseholders will pay for cladding removal will increase with inflation.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is conscious of the need to make any financing scheme affordable for leaseholders. That is why we have said that any financing scheme will have a £50 a month cap. Further details of the financing scheme will be forthcoming.

Hilary Benn:

[\[154765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the additional funding and loans to remove unsafe cladding announced on 10 February 2021 will be available to (a) non-resident leaseholders who are renting out their flats and (b) owner occupier leaseholders; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has announced a globally unprecedented investment in building safety and hundreds of thousands of leaseholders, including both non-resident and owner occupier leaseholders, will be protected from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes.

The Government will provide grant funding for removal of unsafe cladding on buildings over 18 metres. This generous scheme will also provide leaseholders in buildings of 11-18 metres with access to finance for cladding remediation costs and a commitment that their monthly cladding repayment costs will not exceed £50 a month. We will publish more details on how these schemes will work as soon as we are in a position to do so.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[155394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will provide funding for the repair of unsafe cladding on (a) buildings under 18m in height with flammable external cladding and (b) buildings with no freeholders or owners where the building has fallen to the Crown Estate.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is focusing public grant funding on remediating unsafe cladding on high rise buildings of 18 metres or over. This reflects the exceptional fire risk that certain cladding products pose at that height, as previously noted by Dame Judith Hackitt observed in her independent report.

The Government also has announced a generous financing scheme which will mean that buildings of 11-18 metres in height will have access to 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.

Where a property has become ownerless, The Crown Estate can, subject to certain requirements, make arrangements to return the property to private ownership. The private owner would then be able to apply for the Government schemes available, subject to meeting the usual eligibility requirements.

■ Local Government: Meetings

Nickie Aiken:

[\[152649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received from (a) local councils and (b) local government groups

on extending the power to allow councils to continue meeting remotely, such as in licensing and planning committees, after the expiry of the relevant powers in the Coronavirus Act 2020 on 6 May 2021.

Luke Hall:

The Government keeps all policy under review. To extend the facility for councils to continue to meet remotely, or in hybrid form after 7 May 2021 would require primary legislation. We have received representations from local authorities and sector representative organisations making the case for the continuation of remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021 and are carefully considering next steps in this area.

Mick Whitley:

[\[153379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential public health implications of local authorities not being able to hold remote meetings after 7 May 2021.

Mick Whitley:

[\[153380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential equality implications of local authorities not being able to hold remote meetings after 7 May 2021.

Luke Hall:

To extend the facility for councils to continue to meet remotely, or in hybrid form after 7 May 2021 would require primary legislation. The Government keeps all policy under review, including considering the public sector equality duty impacts. We are carefully considering next steps in this area.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[154748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to extend the power to allow councils to continue meeting remotely after the expiry of the relevant powers in the Coronavirus Act 2020 on 6 May 2021.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[154749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received from (a) local authorities and (b) local government groups on extending the power to allow councils to continue meeting remotely after the expiry of the relevant powers in the Coronavirus Act 2020 on 6 May 2021.

Luke Hall:

The Government keeps all policy under review. To extend the facility for all local authorities to continue to meet remotely or in hybrid form after 7 May 2021 would require primary legislation. We have received representations from local authorities and sector representative organisations making the case for the continuation of remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021 and we are carefully considering next steps in this area.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[155297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the letter by the hon Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston in her capacity as Chair of the APPG on British Sikhs dated 26 October 2020, on anti-Sikh hate.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[155298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the letter of 26 October 2020 sent by the hon Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston in her capacity as Chair of the APPG on British Sikhs, on anti-Sikh hate.

Luke Hall:

This Government abhors all forms of hate crime, including that directed at Sikhs. All hate crime directed at anyone for their race, religion, sexuality, disability or gender identity is treated with equal seriousness. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have now responded to the APPG letter relating to anti-Sikh hatred.

■ **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[133642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens.

Luke Hall:

The estimated total cost for building the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is £102 million.

■ **Parking: Codes of Practice**

Olivia Blake:

[\[155484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the results of the consultation on the Parking Code of Practice; and what the timetable is for publishing that code of practice.

Luke Hall:

We are working to improve standards in the private parking industry. Last year we launched public consultations on our proposals for the new Parking Code of Practice and Enforcement Framework, designed to crack down on rogue car parking firms. The consultations closed on 12 October and we will publish our response to the Enforcement Framework consultation in due course. The Code itself is being written by British Standards Institution (BSI) in consultation with key stakeholders. The BSI stakeholder group has reconvened and is now considering the consultation feedback before finalising the Code.

■ Planning Authorities: Land

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[154733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress he has made in determining a standard methodology for local planning authorities to use when calculating their land supply; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to realising our aim of delivering 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s and supporting housing delivery as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. A critical part of this is local authorities making land available for planning. Local planning authorities are expected annually to identify and update a supply of specific 'deliverable' sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement. This is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework

In December, in response to the 'Changes to the current planning system' consultation, the Secretary of State announced a minor revision to the standard method formula for assessing local housing need. The announcement on the standard method provides certainty and stability during a period of economic uncertainty for our communities, businesses, and development sector whilst also focusing greater need into urban areas to maximise existing infrastructure and to support development that reduces the need for high-carbon travel

Our *Planning for the Future* White Paper proposed changes to housing land supply policy, and we are currently analysing responses to that consultation. A Government response will follow.

■ Planning Permission: Appeals

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[154732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what status Neighbourhood Plans have with the Planning Inspector in the determination of planning application appeals; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

Once adopted, neighbourhood plans become part of the development plan for the local area alongside the Local Plan. Planning law requires that decision takers, including planning inspectors, must determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan (including any neighbourhood plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

■ Public Health: Grants

Karin Smyth:

[\[155168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the provision of public health grants in 2021-2022.

Luke Hall:

Ministers and officials in my department regularly engage with counterparts in DHSC, Treasury and local authorities on matters relating to local authorities' finances.

Government has released further details of the £3 billion in additional COVID support for 2021-22. This is additional to the £8 billion already allocated to councils since the start of the pandemic.

■ Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[155145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 130770, what progress he has made in allocating the remaining (a) £2.7 million of the Cold Weather Fund (b) £5 million of the Protect Programme.

Eddie Hughes:

We have confirmed allocations totalling £9 million to local authorities via the Cold Weather Fund, which is available to all local authorities. The Protect Programme has allocated £12 million to local authorities who need it most. This funding has been allocated based on applications from local authorities to MHCLG, according to local need.

Our expert rough sleeping advisers continue to work closely with all local authorities to support their work to protect rough sleepers.

■ Stamp Duties**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**[\[154566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to issue advice to local authorities on property transactions that have commenced and not completed and searches have been lodged with them, prior to the deadline for the stamp duty holiday being applied.

Christopher Pincher:

We have always been clear to local authorities that they should complete local searches within 10 working days and we continue to monitor their performance.

Authorities are aware of the importance of home moves at this time and are balancing this with the need to respond to COVID-19. We have no plans to issue any further advice in respect of the SDLT holiday.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[154873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government plans to join the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability.

Greg Hands:

Sustainable trade is a priority for the UK as an independent trading nation. We have already liberalised over 100 environmental goods in the UK Global Tariff and co-sponsored the new plurilateral Structured Discussions on Trade and Environmental Sustainability in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

We are actively considering further policy options, including the three policy areas which comprise the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS) - environmental goods and services liberalisation, ecolabelling and fossil fuel subsidies.

■ **Arms Trade: Export Controls****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[155055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 December 2020 to Question 115685 on Arms Trade Export Controls; what those errors were; what period of time elapsed before those errors were identified and the licences revoked; whether any inappropriate deliveries were made under those licences before revocation; and what steps her Department is taking to prevent similar errors recurring.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

One OIEL had one destination revoked (Isle of Man). The Isle of Man is a British Crown Dependency and we do not licence exports of military goods to there from the United Kingdom. A licence was issued on 9th January 2014, the error was identified on 10th February 2015 and the licence revoked 11th February 2015.

One OIEL for a variety of goods to a large number of countries had some items for three destinations (Hong Kong, Mongolia and Taiwan) recommended for rejection by one adviser. A licence was issued on 12th May 2015, the error was identified on 29th May 2015, and the licence revoked on 3rd July 2015. The procedure for partial refusal recommendations from advisers has now been amended.

One OIEL had 31 destinations revoked (Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Gibraltar, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Namibia, New Caledonia and Dependencies, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, St Helena, Switzerland, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, United States and Uruguay). The items included on this application required import authorisation from recipient countries before an export licence is granted specifying quantities, which could not be obtained. A licence was issued on 12th February 2019 and the error identified on 15th July 2019; the licence was revoked 17th July 2019.

Two OITCLs for Sierra Leone had goods revoked because the licences were issued in error (Criterion 1). The activity licenced, which was the promotion of supply of less-lethal weapons, was outside the scope of policy as set out by Lord Howell on 9th February 2012. One licence was issued on 5th January 2017 and another on 14th June 2017. The errors were identified on 22nd July 2019 and the licences revoked 29th July 2019.

We keep our processes under constant review and have an ongoing staff training programme. We do not hold information on any transfers that took place under these historic licences, but these licences have been corrected now. We have implemented a transformation programme which, amongst other things, will be improving our processes and control mechanisms, as well as implementing recommendations from an internal audit report.

■ Exports

Emily Thornberry:

[\[154868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the £24.4 billion in export wins reported by her Department in its 2019-20 annual report by the nine target regions for export wins set out in that report, namely (a) Africa, (b) Asia Pacific, (c) China and Hong Kong, (d) Eastern Europe and Central Asia, (e) Europe, (f) Latin America and the Caribbean, (g) Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan, (h) North America and (i) South Asia.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[154869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the £4.92 billion in outward foreign direct investment wins reported by her Department in its 2019-20 annual report by the nine target regions for outward foreign direct investment wins set out in that report, namely (a) Africa, (b) Asia Pacific, (c) China and Hong Kong, (d) Eastern Europe and Central Asia, (e) Europe, (f) Latin America and the Caribbean, (g) Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan, (h) North America and (i) South Asia.

Graham Stuart:

The Department is not able to provide, reliably, the breakdowns requested.

■ Wool: Exports

Ben Lake:

[\[155317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to promote British wool exports.

Graham Stuart:

Trade promotion campaigns in key markets; partnership working with stakeholders, such as the UK Fashion and Textiles Association, at tradeshow, like Premier Vision; leveraging of the DIT's teams in 110 countries; financing and insurance from UK Export Finance; and the global promotion of the GREAT campaign; are some of the many measures being taken to support British wool exports.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Attendance

Peter Kyle:[\[155240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many failure to appear warrants have been issued for (a) murder, (b) rape and (c) serious sexual assault offences since March 2020.

Chris Philp:

Data showing the number of failure to appear warrants issued for (a) murder, (b) rape and (c) all sexual offences excluding rape since March 2020 until 30 September 2020 in both Crown and Magistrates' Courts can be found in the table below:

OFFENCE CATEGORY	CROWN COURT	MAGISTRATES' COURT
Murder	9	17
Rape	14	61
All Sexual Offences (excl Rape)	109	28

Source: HMCTS management information

Notes:

1. Data are taken from a live management information system and can change over time.
2. The data is based on statistics from management information system extract only.
3. Data are management information and may differ from previously published stats and are not subject to the same level of checks as official statistics.
4. Magistrates where a defendant is charged with an indictable offence and if more than one offence and a Failure to Appear Warrant is issued each offence is counted separately.
5. Crown if a defendant has had a bench warrant issued on more than one occasion, they have been counted separately.
6. Offences include attempted and conspiracy sub-groups.
7. Data has not been cross referenced with case files.
8. Serious sexual assault isn't a specific offence category; therefore, no statistics are available. However, we have collated data available for all sexual offences excluding rape.

■ Courts: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham:

[\[155029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of covid-19 have been confirmed among the (a) staff, (b) judiciary and (c) users of each court from 26 January 2021 to the most recent day for which that information is available.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[155030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of covid-19 have been confirmed among jurors, by court, since 26 January 2021.

Chris Philp:

We follow all Public Health and Government COVID-secure guidelines and have put measures in place to keep all court and tribunal users safe. When Government or Public Health guidance changes our measures are updated, an approach which is endorsed by Public Health England and Public Health Wales.

The table below sets out the number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases reported to HMCTS among (a) staff, (b) judiciary, (c) jurors and (d) users between 26 January 2021 and 19 February 2021. Due to the time taken for individuals to take a test, receive test results, and then communicate this to HMCTS (which is then recorded against the date initially reported) further cases may be added after the time of publishing. The table only includes court locations within the HMCTS estate where we have learnt about a new positive case within the dates given above. All other court sites have not reported any new cases between these dates. There should be no assumption that a positive case indicates that there has been transmission within a court building.

HMCTS employs around 19,800 staff (payroll and non-payroll). There are around 19,400 judicial office holders covering all jurisdictions, including coroners and magistrates. The population of jurors fluctuates each week, but we estimate around 4,000 jurors attend weekly.

For staff and agency staff in HMCTS as a whole (including tribunals), positive test rates are falling in line with national numbers. The incident rate amongst staff is trending around the national average.

Comparability with national statistics will be affected by our staff locations (staff are not evenly distributed across the country) and when the numbers are changing rapidly the difference between incident date (our figures) and date of positive test (national figures) becomes relevant. However, overall, the trend is not dissimilar to national averages time.

Note that courts without any confirmed positive cases in the time period are not listed.

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
AMERSHAM LAW COURTS			1	
BIRMINGHAM CIVIL AND FAMILY JUSTICE CENTRE	2	1		
BIRMINGHAM CROWN COURT				1
BIRMINGHAM MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
BOLTON COMBINED COURT				1
BRADFORD COMBINED COURT	1	1		1
BRENTFORD COUNTY COURT & FAMILY COURT		1		
BROMLEY COUNTY COURT & FAMILY COURT	8			
BROMLEY MAGISTRATES COURT				1
CAMBRIDGE CROWN COURT				2
CANTERBURY COMBINED COURT CENTRE	1			
CARDIFF MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
CENTRAL FAMILY COURT (First Avenue House)	4			

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
CHELMSFORD COUNTY AND FAMILY COURT				1
COVENTRY MAGISTRATES COURT				1
CRAWLEY MAGISTRATES COURT				1
CROYDON CROWN, COUNTY COURT AND FAMILY COURT			1	
DERBY COMBINED COURT CENTRE				2
DUDLEY MAGISTRATES COURT		1		
DURHAM JUSTICE CENTRE	1			
FOLKESTONE MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
GREAT GRIMSBY COMBINED COURT CENTRE			1	
GUILDFORD MAGISTRATES COURT AND FAMILY COURT				1
HARROW CROWN COURT			2	
HENDON MAGISTRATES COURT				1

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
HIGHBURY CORNER MAGISTRATES				2
HOVE TRIAL CENTRE			1	
HULL MAGISTRATES COURT				1
INNER LONDON CROWN COURT				1
IPSWICH MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
ISLEWORTH CROWN COURT			1	
KIDDERMINSTER MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
KINGSTON UPON THAMES CROWN COURT	1			
KIRKLEES (HUDDERSFIELD) MAGISTRATE COURT & FAMILY COURT				1
LEEDS CIVIL HEARING CENTRE	1			
LEEDS COMBINED COURT CENTRE	4			
LEEDS MAGISTRATES COURT & FAMILY COURT	3			

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
LEICESTER MAGISTRATES COURT	2			
LINCOLN COUNTY COURT & FAMILY COURT	1			
LINCOLN CROWN COURT				1
LIVERPOOL CIVIL AND FAMILY COURT	3	1		
LIVERPOOL CROWN COURT	2			
LOUGHBOROUGH MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
LUTON AND SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE MAGISTRATES COURT AND FAMILY COURT	1			2
LUTON CROWN COURT			1	2
LUTON JUSTICE CENTRE	3	2		
MANCHESTER COUNTY & FAMILY COURT	2			
MANCHESTER CROWN COURT (CROWN SQUARE)			1	
MANCHESTER CROWN COURT (MINSHULL STREET)		1		

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
MANCHESTER MAGISTRATES COURT	2	1		1
MEDWAY MAGISTRATES COURT AND FAMILY COURT	1			1
MERTHYR TYDFIL COMBINED COURT CENTRE				1
MID & SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND LAW COURT	1			
NEWCASTLE CIVIL & FAMILY COURTS & TRIBUNALS CENTRE	1			
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE COMBINED COURT CENTRE			1	2
NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE JUSTICE CENTRE		1		
NORTH TYNESIDE MAGISTRATES COURT	5			
NORTHAMPTON CROWN COURT, COUNTY COURT & FAMILY COURT	2			
NOTTINGHAM COUNTY COURT AND FAMILY COURT	1		1	
NOTTINGHAM MAGISTRATES	1			

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
COURT				
OXFORD COMBINED COURT CENTRE				2
PETERBOROUGH COMBINED COURT CENTRE	1			
PETERBOROUGH MAGISTRATES COURT	1			1
POOLE MAGISTRATES COURT	1			1
PORTSMOUTH COMBINED COURT CENTRE	1			
PRESTON COMBINED COURT CENTRE				1
PRESTON CROWN COURT	2			
READING CROWN COURT				2
READING MAGISTRATES COURT AND FAMILY COURT				1
ROLLS BUILDING	2	1		
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE - East Block	2			
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE – MAIN BUILDING	1			

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE – THOMAS MOORE BUILDING				
SCARBOROUGH JUSTICE CENTRE	1			
SHEFFIELD MAGISTRATES COURT		1		1
SHREWSBURY JUSTICE CENTRE				1
SNARES BROOK CROWN COURT			1	1
SOUTH TYNESIDE MAGISTRATES COURT & FAMILY COURT				1
SOUTHAMPTON COMBINED COURT CENTRE				2
STAFFORD COMBINED COURT CENTRE			1	
STAINES MAGISTRATES COURT AND FAMILY COURT	2			
STOKE-ON-TRENT COMBINED COURT	1			1
SWANSEA CROWN COURT	1			
SWANSEA MAGISTRATES COURT				1
TEESSIDE				1

COURT LOCATIONS	STAFF	JUDGES	JURORS	COURT AND TRIBUNAL USER
COMBINED COURT CENTRE				
TEESIDE MAGISTRATES COURT				1
THAMES MAGISTRATES COURT		1		
UXBRIDGE MAGISTRATES COURT		1		5
WALSALL COUNTY & FAMILY COURT	1			
WARWICKSHIRE JUSTICE CENTRE (SOUTH)				1
WESTMINSTER MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
WILLESDEN MAGISTRATES COURT	1			
WIMBLEDON MAGISTRATES COURT		2		
WOOLWICH CROWN COURT	1			
YORK MAGISTRATES & FAMILY COURT				1

Judiciary: Retirement

Bambos Charalambous: [\[155299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Government plans to respond to the consultation on the mandatory retirement age for judicial office holders which closed on 16 October 2020.

Alex Chalk:

The Government's consultation on proposals to increase the mandatory retirement age for judicial office holders received over 1000 responses from the magistracy, the judiciary and their associated bodies, as well as stakeholders from the legal profession.

We are currently finalising the consultation response and will publish this shortly, with a view to legislate for any changes we decide to make at the earliest opportunity.

Prison Officers: Pay

Grahame Morris: [\[154965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on prison safety of the decision to reject the Prison Service Pay Review Body's recommendation 3.

Grahame Morris: [\[154966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what equality impact assessment his Department has undertaken on the decision to reject the Prison Service Pay Review Body's recommendation 3.

Grahame Morris: [\[154967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what financial analysis his Department undertook prior to the decision to reject the Prison Service Pay Review Body's recommendation 3.

Grahame Morris: [\[154968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the decision to reject the Prison Service Pay Review Body's recommendation 3.

Grahame Morris: [\[154969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has received (a) advice and (b) guidance on what constitutes exceptional circumstances for the purpose of considering recommendations by the Prison Service Pay Review Body; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

The 20/21 PSPRB report was received on 5 June 2020 and included a recommendation, recommendation 3, to uplift the pay of Band 3 prison staff on modernised terms and conditions by £3,000. This recommendation was ultimately not

accepted by the government, on the basis of the exceptional costs associated with implementing the recommendation, the impact on the overall prison service pay structure, and the changing labour market conditions due to the exceptional economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision regarding this recommendation was announced on 10 December 2020 (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-12-10/hcws638>).

Ahead of the decision regarding this recommendation, extensive work was undertaken by the Ministry of Justice together with HM Treasury to understand the costs and impacts of it. This included considering whether any workforce reforms could be delivered alongside the recommendation which would create efficiencies and savings, and therefore deliver value for money by offsetting some of the cost of the recommendation. This was undertaken with a view to possible discussions with recognised trade unions, should an option for affordable delivery of the recommendation, which could offer value for money for taxpayers be identified. The conclusion was that sufficient savings required to offer value for money could not be achieved, meaning the recommendation remained unaffordable.

The Ministry of Justice also considered the possible impacts on recruitment, retention and morale, which in turn have an effect on prison safety and security. However, recruitment, retention and staff morale levels are all driven by a range of factors and an increase in pay alone cannot be assumed to be a fix for these issues. Furthermore, there are significant investments being made into prison safety and security, and financial pressures from elsewhere impact our ability to deliver these.

An Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted and considered in reaching the decision to reject recommendation 3. This considered the demographics of staff and how the decision to reject the recommendation would interact with eliminating unlawful discrimination and advancing quality of opportunity.

The Secretary of State's policy is that PSPRB recommendations will only be departed from "in exceptional circumstances, one of which would be on the grounds of affordability". Furthermore, all appropriate advice was taken by the Secretary of State for Justice as to the relevant facts and tests relevant to the decision on recommendation 3.

The decision of 10 December 2020 to ultimately reject recommendation 3 was taken by the Secretary of State. It was not subject to the Cabinet committee write round procedure but was, as is consistent with usual practice with respect to public sector pay awards, preceded by HM Treasury input.

The Department remains committed to working with the review body, within the boundaries of the pay restraint policy as set out by the Chancellor for the 2021/22 pay round, which includes targeted awards for those earning less than £24k per annum. We will also continue to work closely with recognised trade unions.

Conor McGinn:[\[155171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with recognised trade unions on the effect on prison officer morale of his Department's decision not to implement Recommendation 3 as outlined in the Prison Service Pay Review Body's Nineteenth Report on England and Wales 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

I am grateful to recognised trade unions for continued engagement and collaboration on issues relevant to the prison workforce. It is vital, particularly in the current circumstances, that we continue to work together.

In addition to ongoing engagement between my officials and the recognised trade unions on prison pay, the Lord Chancellor met with our colleagues at the Prison Officers Association on 28th January to discuss the 2020-21 pay award. Staff morale - amongst other relevant matters such as government affordability, adequate investment into safety and security, professionalisation and leadership, and staff wellbeing - has of course been fundamental to those discussions throughout.

I recognise the decision to reject 'recommendation 3' will have been disappointing for our staff, however the decision taken is not a comment on the value of staff and their hard work.

I welcome engagement from recognised trade unions with the Prison Service Pay Review Body to best inform recommendations for prison pay going forward.

■ Young Offenders: Care Leavers

Peter Kyle:[\[155242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of children cautioned or sentenced in each of the last five calendar years had previously been resident in unregulated care settings.

Lucy Frazer:

We do not hold information on the number of children sentenced or cautioned who have previously been in unregulated care settings. We published experimental statistics in January 2021 setting out the assessed care status of children who receive a custodial sentence, Youth Rehabilitation Order, Referral Order or Reparation Order. These statistics can be found on the page <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2019-to-2020> under 'Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System: Supplementary Tables'.

■ Youth Offending Teams: Termination of employment

Peter Kyle:[\[155244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employees of youth offending teams have left the profession in each of the last five years (a) nationally, and (b) by region.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Board do not hold data on how many employees of youth offending teams have left the profession in the last five years.

The annual youth justice statistics include national totals for the youth offending team workforce. However, the data does not show if individuals have left the profession or have moved elsewhere in the profession. The most recent staffing data is published in Annex E in the additional annexes at [Youth Justice Statistics: 2019 to 2020](#).

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Road Haulage Association: UK Trade with EU****Mr David Jones:**[\[154853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will respond to requests from the Road Haulage Association for a meeting to discuss the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland last met representatives of the Road Haulage Association on 22 January at a roundtable discussion convened by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Its representatives have also attended the Protocol sub-group of the Brexit Business Taskforce, which is co-chaired by officials in the Northern Ireland Office and the Cabinet Office.

The Secretary of State will continue to engage closely with businesses and representative organisations in Northern Ireland, and will consider any further requests for a meeting that the Road Haulage Association make.

SCOTLAND**■ Whisky: Scotland****Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[155396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the importance of the Scotch Whisky industry to the Scottish economy.

Mr Alister Jack:

In 2020, Scotch Whisky exports were worth £3.8bn (down from £4.9bn in 2019). In 2019, Scotch Whisky accounted for 75% of Scottish food and drink exports, 21% of all UK food and drink exports, and 1.4% of all UK goods exports. The Scotch Whisky industry provides £5.5bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy.

There are more than 10,000 people directly employed in the Scotch Whisky industry in Scotland and over 40,000 jobs across the UK are supported by the industry. In 2018, there were 2.2 million visits to Scotch Whisky distilleries, making the industry the third most popular tourist attraction in Scotland.

Wendy Chamberlain:[\[155397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the public health impact of Scotch Whisky distillers producing hand sanitiser for their local communities.

Mr Alister Jack:

Scotch Whisky producers are just some of the many businesses across Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom that have come up with new and innovative ways to battle the coronavirus, and supported wider efforts to tackle the pandemic.

The many donations from local distilleries to the NHS provided huge quantities of hand sanitiser to keep frontline health and care workers safe. Scotch Whisky distillers joined by other distillers have not just helped their local communities in Scotland, but their manufacturing of hand sanitiser has helped all parts of the United Kingdom.

This was an initiative coordinated by the Scotch Whisky Association, which many distilleries participated in. The initiative has helped protect the health of millions of people in communities across Scotland. HMRC worked with the Scotch Whisky Association to allow distillers to manufacture sanitiser without needing to pay duty on the alcohol in it, when it has been made to WHO specifications.

Wendy Chamberlain:[\[155398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the role of Scotch Whisky distillers as employers in rural Scottish communities.

Mr Alister Jack:

There are currently 134 operating Scotch Whisky distilleries across Scotland. More than 10,000 people are directly employed in the Scotch Whisky industry in Scotland and over 40,000 jobs across the UK are supported by the industry. 7,000 of these jobs are in rural areas of Scotland providing vital employment and investment to communities across the Highlands and Islands and elsewhere in Scotland.

This Government fully recognises the important contribution the Scotch Whisky industry makes to rural communities which is why we continue to support the industry in a number of different ways, for example:

- We promote Scotch Whisky through the “Food is Great” campaign and last year we announced £1 million dedicated to showcasing Scottish food and drink exports around the world;
- We also froze spirits duty at Budget 2020 and at five of the six budgets before that and this ensured that the price of a typical bottle of Scotch is £1.54 lower than it otherwise would have been since ending the spirits duty escalator in 2014;
- We provided a £10 million fund to help the UK's world-famous distilleries go green by switching to low carbon fuels such as hydrogen.

Wendy Chamberlain:[\[155399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential competitive disadvantage faced by Scotch

Whisky and other spirits produced in Scotland that are taxed higher per unit of alcohol than other alcohol categories.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Government remains clear in its support for Scotch Whisky, and other Scottish spirits, and we have taken action to this end. The freeze in spirits duty at Budget 2020 and at five of the six budgets before that ensured the price of a typical bottle of Scotch is £1.54 lower than it otherwise would have been since ending the spirits duty escalator in 2014.

More broadly, the Government announced at the 2020 Budget it would review the alcohol duty system in the round. A call for evidence concluded in November and further announcements will be made in due course.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Gavin Newlands:

[\[155130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many meetings he has had with representatives of the aviation industry to discuss the planned aviation recovery package.

Robert Courts:

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Department for Transport has engaged very regularly with the industry, including through both Ministerial meetings and official led sessions.

As announced on 22nd February as part of the roadmap for the phased lifting of restrictions in England, the Secretary of State for Transport will also now lead a successor to the Global Travel Taskforce to develop a framework that can facilitate greater international travel when the time is right, while still managing the risk from imported cases and variants.

The government is also developing a forward looking strategic framework on the recovery of the sector, which we engage with the industry on and will publish later this year.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Conor McGinn:

[\[155170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on additional financial support for the community coach and minibuss sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has announced a range of measures available to support UK businesses, including coach and minibuss companies. These measures include the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) and loan schemes such as the Bounce

Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILs).

On 5 January, the Chancellor announced a further £500 million of locally-administered Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding to support businesses that are not legally required to close, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to the national lockdown. Coach and minibus companies could benefit from this funding, and are encouraged to contact their local authority for more information.

The Department for Transport continues to work with transport sector representatives and with other government departments to keep support for transport operators under review.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[154619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to put in place a new Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, before the current strategy period ends at the beginning of April 2021.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[154620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans for the successor scheme to the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy to (a) retain the existing targets to double cycling trips and to increase walking trips to school journeys, (b) include a strengthened target to boost overall walking and (c) include and clarify the target from the Government's Gear Change vision document, for half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS 2) will be published after the Government has agreed and set out its long-term spending plans for active travel at the next multi-year Spending Review. It will reflect and build on the commitments outlined in the Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan of July 2020, as well as setting out the financial resources available for cycling and walking and the other matters required by the Infrastructure Act 2015, including targets for cycling and walking.

These plans will be formally set out to Parliament in due course, as is required by the Infrastructure Act 2015.

■ **Cycling: Safety**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[155220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve cyclist safety through enhancements to road infrastructure and layout.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government has announced ambitious plans for cycling and walking and has committed an unprecedented £2 billion of funding for active travel over the next 5 years. The details are set out in the Prime Minister's Gear Change plan, published in July and can be viewed here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england.

The detailed design of cycle lanes is a matter for individual local traffic authorities. Design advice for cycling infrastructure, including cycle lanes, can be found in Local Transport Note 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' which is at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120.

The Government also published additional Network Management Duty guidance, which was updated in November 2020. This clearly sets out what the Government expects local authorities to do in making changes to their road layouts to encourage cycling and walking.

Motorways**Jim McMahon:****[154650]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff at Highways England have been dedicated to recovering broken down vehicles on smart motorways in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean:

Highways England's traffic officers patrol the entire SRN to respond to incidents, including collisions and breakdowns. There are 1091 Traffic Officers and 340 control room staff across Highways England's regional operations that have responsibility for managing the SRN, including the All Lane Running (ALR) sections.

Highways England has worked closely with the recovery industry to ensure that its working practices are aligned when working on the SRN. In relation to the ALR sections of the SRN, it has implemented its plans to improve relationships with the recovery industry, and in line with Action 16 of the *Smart Motorway Safety Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan*, has established the Recovery Industry Executive Committee, which has strengthened regional working groups and refreshed guidance on the joint working protocols for breakdown recovery in ALR environments.

Parking Offences: Pedestrian Areas**Rosie Cooper:****[154870]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support local councils in preventing drivers of large vehicles from parking on residential pavements to tackle (a) mobility barriers and (b) road safety issues.

Rachel Maclean:

The contravention of parking HGVs on footways is already subject to civil enforcement and 97% of councils have taken civil enforcement powers. Furthermore,

my Department recently consulted on measures to assist councils in addressing pavement parking by other vehicles. We received over 15,000 responses and are currently analysing them to ensure we capture all views. We will publish a response to the consultation in due course.

■ **Railway Stations: Cardiff**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[155048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Transport for Wales on the ability of inter-city services to use the planned St Mellons Parkway station in the east of Cardiff when completed.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We welcome this private sector led proposal for an additional station serving the South Wales area and look forward to receiving the full business case for the scheme.

We will work with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales under the Welsh devolution arrangements on this scheme as it progresses.

■ **Railways: Tickets**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[154580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the potential annual gross income stream across all train operating companies after the covid-19 lockdown from (a) weekly seasons tickets and (b) 3-day or part time period tickets and (c) season tickets for travel on specific days of the week.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Passenger demand has fallen dramatically over the last year in response to COVID-19. Due to this and a potential future shift in passenger behaviours, future rail income is also uncertain. Any new flexible season ticket products will aim to encourage and support passengers returning to the railway when it is safe to do so.

We are working closely with industry to develop a solution that offers better value and convenience for those who commute flexibly and will provide further details in due course.

Afzal Khan:

[\[155372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Rail Delivery Group on offering refunds or extensions to passengers who have purchased railcards and are no longer able to use those railcards as a result of covid-19 restrictions.

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 are not discussing the prospects of offering refunds or extensions for railcard users with the Rail Delivery Group.

■ **Regional Airports: Coronavirus**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[154722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on regional airports.

Robert Courts:

The Department recognises the severe impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on travel, and work continues to understand how best the industry can be supported at this time. The Government is working on a strategic framework for the recovery of the sector. It will explore the return to growth of the aviation sector, and will include consideration of workforce and skills, regional connectivity, noise, innovation and regulation, and consumer issues.

Aviation businesses have access to the unprecedented economic support package that the Chancellor has put in place to help businesses to manage the challenges they are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Firms can continue to draw upon the package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and VAT deferrals.

In addition to this, the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme (AGOSS) opened for applications on 29 January to provide support for eligible commercial airports and ground handlers in England. It will provide support up to the equivalent of their business rates liabilities or COVID-19 losses – whichever is lower – in the 2020/21 financial year, subject to certain conditions and a cap per claimant of £8m.

Through the Global Travel Taskforce, the Government will work closely with the industry to find ways to safely and gradually ease restrictions on international travel. We will set out more detail on this soon.

■ **Road Traffic Offences: Speed Limits**

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[154952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle persistent speeding drivers on rural roads and through rural communities.

Rachel Maclean:

We expect all drivers to observe the speed limit and enforcement of the speed limit is a matter for the police. Policing of our roads and how available resources are deployed is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local issues. Local residents, their elected representatives, and the police can discuss these matters together.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[154953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a national speeding campaign to tackle speeding offences on rural roads.

Rachel Maclean:

Road safety is a top priority for the Government, and the Department takes this very seriously. Road deaths and injuries can cause suffering, economic loss and life-changing misfortune, and reducing this on our roads is a key priority, including through reducing speeding.

One of the ways the Department does this is through the THINK! campaign, which currently targets young male drivers who are over-represented in deaths and serious injuries on our roads. THINK! is running a national speeding campaign targeted at this audience, following an uplift in the proportion of vehicles speeding in the first national lockdown. In 2019, speed-related factors contributed to almost half of road deaths and serious injuries among this audience and we know that young men are over-represented in industries where they still need to travel for work despite lockdown restrictions, such as manufacturing and essential retail. The campaign uses paid social media, broadcast radio, digital radio and Spotify advertising,, including messaging targeted specifically at young drivers travelling on rural roads.

Messaging on speeding and rural roads will also form part of an upcoming campaign due to launch in early summer which will also target high-risk young male drivers, and we will also use the Cabinet Office service to run radio advertising aimed at changing attitudes towards speeding among a broader audience, including a focus on rural roads.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[155438\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his timescale is for responding to the consultation on the Alcohol Duty Review published on 1 October 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

Having received 107 submissions to the call for evidence, we are now in the process of analysing responses. We will provide further updates in due course.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Taxation

Ian Murray:

[\[154964\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of taxation on Scotch Whisky and wine in France.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury keeps all taxes, including Scotch Whisky and wine, under review whilst preparing for fiscal events. Changes to duty rates are determined through assessment of the prevailing economic and fiscal circumstances in the UK; and as such no comparative assessment to France has been made.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[154725\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings he has had with representatives of the aviation industry to discuss the planned Aviation Recovery Package.

Gavin Newlands:[\[155135\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings he has had with representatives of the aviation industry to discuss the planned aviation recovery package.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Chancellor speaks to industry representatives on a regular basis about a range of matters.

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry as a result of Covid-19 and firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills. In addition to economy-wide measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, 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 £8bn of guarantees provided by UK Export Finance.

In addition, the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme launched on 29 January 2021 will provide support for eligible businesses, up to the equivalent of their business rates liabilities in the 2020/21 financial year, subject to certain conditions and a cap per claimant of £8m. This will help companies with their fixed costs and could unlock shareholder and lender support.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:[\[154726\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of an aviation recovery package.

Margaret Ferrier:[\[155085\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of introducing an aviation recovery package.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Chancellor regularly discusses a wide range of matters related to economic recovery with Cabinet colleagues.

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry as a result of Covid-19 and firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills. In addition to economy-wide measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, 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 £8bn of guarantees provided by UK Export Finance.

In addition, the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme launched on 29 January 2021 will provide support for eligible businesses, up to the equivalent of their business rates liabilities in the 2020/21 financial year, subject to certain conditions and a cap per claimant of £8m. This will help companies with their fixed costs and could unlock shareholder and lender support.

■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

Darren Henry:

[\[154562\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of reducing beer duty to help support pubs and breweries who face financial hardship as a result of covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and what further support he plans to make available to the hospitality industry to ensure its future viability.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government understands that this is a very challenging time for pubs and breweries. For that reason, the Government froze beer duty at the 2020 Budget. At the upcoming budget, the Government will outline the next stages of its plan to support businesses and families across the UK.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[154835\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of beer duty in (a) the UK, (b) Germany and (c) France.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury keeps all taxes, including beer duty, under review whilst preparing for fiscal events. Changes to duty rates are determined through assessment of the economic and fiscal circumstances in the UK; and as such no comparative assessment to France or Germany has been made.

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[155314\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many beer duty returns (a) have been received by HMRC and (b) were nil returns, per month for each of the last 18 months for which data is available; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The information requested is provided in the table below:

BEER DUTY RETURNS

Month	(a) Received by HMRC	(b) Nil returns
August 2019	2,100	415
September 2019	1,991	441
October 2019	1,602	489
November 2019	2,051	448
December 2019	2,009	453
January 2020	2,020	482
February 2020	2,039	457
March 2020	2,011	521
April 2020	1,610	756
May 2020	1,607	687
June 2020	1,785	596
July 2020	1,337	491
August 2020	1,675	468
September 2020	1,547	455
October 2020	1,472	468
November 2020	1,520	546
December 2020	1,520	523
January 2021	1,706	556

■ **Build Back Better Council**

Imran Hussain:

[155099]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the membership of the Build Back Better Council does not include representatives of trade unions.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Build Back Better Business Council has been convened to afford an opportunity to the Government and business leaders to share ideas on achieving the future economic prosperity of the country. The council's meetings are in addition to the regular and ongoing engagement with trades unions, businesses and business

representative groups that takes place across Government. Trades Unions and BROs are important stakeholders and continue to feed into work across Government on economic recovery and future growth. The council's terms of reference can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-business-council-terms-of-reference>.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Alison Thewliss: [155141]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government's statement of 10 February 2021 on unsafe cladding, whether those funds will be subject to Barnett consequential.

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.

As set out in my answer of 22 February, 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.

■ Carers: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Virginia Crosbie: [155480]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support he plans to make available to people who are carers for a disabled partner and who have been denied access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by their employers.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises and values the vital contribution made by carers in supporting some of the most vulnerable in society.

Carers who are not put on furlough by their employer could be eligible for a number of benefits. Unpaid carers may be able to apply for Carer's Allowance if they meet the qualifying conditions, such as providing 35 hours of care a week. In order to ensure that carers already in receipt of Carer's Allowance do not inadvertently stop receiving it because of changes to patterns of care during COVID-19, the Government has allowed emotional support to count towards the 35 hours of care being provided by the carer. The Government has also relaxed the rules on breaks in care. These measures recognise that carers need extra flexibility in the way they provide care during the current emergency.

The Government continues to protect the value of benefits paid to carers while also spending record amounts in real terms. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.25 a week, meaning about an additional £700 a year for carers. Between 2020/21 and 2025/26, real terms expenditure on Carer's

Allowance is forecast to increase by nearly a third (about £1 billion). By 2025/26, the Government is forecast to spend just over £4 billion a year on Carer's Allowance.

Furthermore, Carer's Allowance is not the only benefit available to carers. Carers have access to the full range of social security benefits depending on their individual circumstances. Many of these benefits have additional elements to recognise the additional contribution and responsibilities associated with caring. For example, Universal Credit includes a carer element at the rate of £162.92 per monthly assessment period.

Carers will also benefit from the Government's wider changes to the welfare system to support individuals during the pandemic, worth £7.4bn in 2020/21 according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates. This includes carers on Universal Credit who will benefit from the temporary increase to the standard allowance by £20 per week.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[154578\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme beyond April 2021 to support the aviation industry which is facing ongoing restrictions as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Fay Jones:

[\[154587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (b) Self Employment Income Support Scheme beyond the end of April 2021.

Kevin Brennan:

[\[154800\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme beyond 30 April 2021.

Nickie Aiken:

[\[155385\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme for businesses affected by social distancing or travel restrictions until the end of Q3 2021, particularly in the live events and conference sectors.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided a comprehensive economic response that is one of the most generous globally, including very substantial steps to protect jobs. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has helped to pay the wages of people in 9.9 million jobs across the country, providing £46.4bn worth of support as of 13 December. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has received claims from 2.7 million self-employed workers, amounting to £13.7bn as of 13 December.

The Government will set out the next phase of the plan to tackle the virus and support jobs at Budget 2021.

■ English Language: Education

Alex Sobel: [\[155363\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether Business Rates Relief are planned to be extended to English language teaching centres.

Jesse Norman:

This year, due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties worth over £10 billion. The Government has also frozen the business rates multiplier for all businesses for 2021-22.

The Government has provided various schemes to support firms, including English language teaching centres, 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.

■ Freezing of Assets: Myanmar

Hilary Benn: [\[154764\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total value of assets frozen to date is from UK sanctions applied on 16 Burmese security and military personnel.

John Glen:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) undertakes an annual review of frozen assets in the UK, requiring all persons or institutions that hold or control frozen assets in the UK to report to OFSI. Details of assets reported to OFSI in 2020 are not yet available and will be published in OFSI's 2020-2021 Annual Review.

Details of assets reported to OFSI in 2019 were published in OFSI's 2019-2020 Annual Review. As of September 2019, £12.5 billion of frozen funds across all regimes were reported to be held by UK institutions. This figure is provided on an aggregate basis so as not to disclose the value of funds held by particular individuals.

■ Hospices: Finance

Ian Murray: [\[154962\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding has been allocated to hospices in England in each relevant budget year since the start of covid-19 related expenditure; and what the consequential allocations to each devolved Administration were.

Steve Barclay:

In 2020/21 we have made available an additional £280m to hospices in England as part of the COVID-19 response.

Of this, £31m was funded by the Department for Health and Social Care from existing budgets (on which the devolved administrations have already received Barnett consequentials) and £249m was new funding confirmed at Supplementary Estimates 2020-21.

The £249m new funding generated £47m in Barnett consequentials for the devolved administrations at Supplementary Estimates 2020-21. This comprised £24m for the Scottish Government, £15m for the Welsh Government and £8m for the Northern Ireland Executive.

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

■ Hospitality Industry: Tax Allowances**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[155478\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending (a) the reduction of VAT to 5 per cent for hospitality businesses beyond March 2021 and (b) business rates relief for financial year 2021-22 for hospitality businesses.

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 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, and has frozen the business rates multiplier for all businesses for 2021-22.

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

■ Housing: VAT**Drew Hendry:**[\[155178\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of removing VAT from extensions to residential property that are undertaken to meet a disabled persons needs.

Drew Hendry:

[\[155179\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing VAT from building works undertaken in a residential property that are required to adapt a property to meet a disabled persons needs.

Jesse Norman:

Consumers already benefit from a zero rate of VAT on certain building work for disabled people and a reduced VAT rate of 5 per cent on residential construction under certain conditions. Extending the current reliefs further would come at a cost to the Exchequer, and must be viewed in the context of about £50 billion worth of requests received since the EU referendum.

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

■ Insurance

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[155261\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the insurance sector's level of compliance with their terms of cover and obligations with respect to claims made by consumers in the last 12 months.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the independent non-governmental body responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry. The FCA's rules require insurers to handle claims fairly and promptly and settle claims quickly once settlement terms are agreed. In addition, the FCA has said that, in light of COVID-19, insurers must consider very carefully the needs of their customers and show flexibility in their treatment of them.

The Government is working closely with the FCA to ensure that the rules are being upheld during this crisis and fully supports the regulator in its role.

■ Maternity Leave: Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Alison Thewliss:

[\[155139\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme to take into account periods of maternity leave.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has amended the eligibility conditions of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) to extend eligibility to self-employed parents who were ineligible for the SEISS because they did not submit a tax return for 2018-19, or whose trading profits in 2018-19 were less than their other income because they were pregnant or taking time out of their trade to care for their new-born or newly adopted child.

These individuals were able to claim the past three SEISS grants using either their 2017-18 self-assessment return or an average of their 2016-17 and 2017-18 returns

as the basis for their eligibility. They also needed to meet the other standard eligibility criteria for support under the SEISS.

This was not a fundamental change to the SEISS, but an amendment to bring these individuals into eligibility for the scheme. It did not affect the grant calculation for those who submitted a 2018/19 return and were already eligible.

For those already eligible, the calculation for the SEISS grants uses an average of the self-employed individual's trading profits, which evens out fluctuations in earnings which self-employed people may experience for any number of reasons.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Kevin Brennan: [\[154802\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on extending business rates relief into the 2021-22 financial year.

Stephen Morgan: [\[155351\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending business rates relief beyond the end of the 2020-21 financial year.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has invited representations from stakeholders on various aspects of the business rates system through the fundamental review of business rates.

This year, due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties worth over £10 billion. The Government has also frozen the business rates multiplier for all businesses for 2021-22. Business rates are devolved in Wales, and so any reliefs are a matter for the Welsh Government.

The Budget will set out the next phase of the Government's plans to tackle the virus, protect jobs and support business.

■ Orchestras: Tax Allowances

Barbara Keeley: [\[154581\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of covid-19 social distancing restrictions on the level of orchestra tax relief claimed since April 2020.

Barbara Keeley: [\[154916\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to extend orchestra tax relief to performances with no in-person audience during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC publish official statistics for the creative industries tax reliefs annually.

Statistics for the amount of Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) claimed in the 2020-21 tax year will be published in summer 2021. In 2019-20, the Government provided £18 million of support to 565 productions through OTR.

The Government keeps all tax reliefs under review, and regularly receives proposals for changes to tax reliefs. When considering proposed changes, HM Treasury must ensure they provide support to businesses across the economy in a fair way and that taxpayer money is targeted effectively.

■ **Pensions: Up-rating**

Patricia Gibson:

[155157]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of aligning the retail price index with the consumer prices index on pensions for (a) women and (b) people on defined benefit pension schemes.

John Glen:

On 25 November 2020, the Government and UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published their response to the consultation on the timing of reform to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Owing to shortcomings in its calculation, UKSA intends to bring the methods and data sources of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) into RPI.

The Government and UKSA are mindful of the widespread use of RPI in the economy, and, as such, sought views in the consultation on the broader impacts of reform. The Government and UKSA received approximately 550 responses from members of defined benefit (DB) pension schemes whose benefits are linked to RPI.

It is apparent that some DB pension scheme members will be affected by UKSA's reform. The effect of reform on the members of such schemes will depend on whether their benefits are linked to RPI under the trust deed and rules of the scheme. As noted in the consultation response document, the Pensions Policy Institute (PPI) estimates that the average reduction in lifetime income from an individual's RPI-linked pension post-retirement could be 4 per cent for a woman and 5 per cent for a man. However, the PPI estimates that women will generally experience a greater lifetime reduction in overall pension benefit, as they live longer than men on average.

The announcement in the response by the Chancellor and UKSA Chair means that reform will not be implemented before 2030. The Government keeps the occupational pensions system under review and will continue to do so.

In making its decision (with regard to the timing of reform) the Government has had due regard to and complied with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty as laid out in the Equality Act 2010

For further information please see the consultation response at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-the-reform-to-retail-prices-index-rpi-methodology>.

■ Property Development: Scotland

Alison Thewliss:

[\[155142\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government's announcement on 10 February 2021, whether the tax to be levied on the residential property development sector will apply in Scotland.

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.

That statement announced plans to introduce a new tax for the UK residential property development sector in 2022, to ensure the largest developers make a fair contribution to cladding remediation costs. The tax will apply on a UK-wide basis and the government will consult with industry on further policy design considerations in due course, to ensure the tax is proportionate and reflects developers' ability to pay.

The tax will help fund a large spending package, and 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.

■ Railways

Imran Hussain:

[\[155097\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with officials in the Department for Transport on the integrated rail plan for the Midlands and the North.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government is drawing up an Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the north. The Department for Transport is working across government, including with HM Treasury, to look at how best to integrate, scope and deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 Phase 2b, Midlands Rail Hub and other major Network Rail enhancement programmes more efficiently and to deliver benefits from investments more quickly.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Rosie Duffield:

[\[154594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will announce details of the fourth grant of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme before 3 March 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government remains committed to supporting the self-employed population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government confirmed in January that further details of the fourth grant, which will cover February to the end of April, will be announced alongside other economic updates at the Budget on 3 March.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[155225\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the need to provide further support to SME high street businesses that have been closed for a prolonged period of time due to covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government understands that this is a challenging time for high street businesses which have been acutely impacted by the pandemic. This is why the Government has delivered support to these businesses through extensions to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), VAT and business rates relief, a moratorium on evictions to protect commercial tenants, cash grants to protect businesses, extensions to existing loan schemes, and 'Pay as You Grow' options for businesses which have taken out loans through BBLS or CBILS, giving a longer repayment period and allowing further flexibility on repayments.

The Government is committed to doing whatever it takes to support the country through the COVID-19 pandemic and support will continue. The 3 March Budget will outline the next stage in the Government's Plan for Jobs including further detail on economic support to protect jobs and livelihoods across the UK. The approach will reflect the steps set out in the roadmap: as restrictions ease and the economy is gradually and safely reopened, the Government will carefully tailor the level of support to individuals and businesses to reflect the changing circumstances.

■ Stamp Duties

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[154678\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of a cliff-edge ending of the stamp duty holiday on property sales and purchases that are currently underway and which fail to complete before the chosen deadline; and if he will make it his policy to reintroduce that duty in graduated phases when the stamp duty holiday ends.

Jesse Norman:

The temporary increase in the Stamp Duty Land Tax nil rate band was designed to create immediate momentum within the property market, where property transactions fell by as much as 50 per cent during the COVID-19 lockdown in March.

The Government is monitoring delays in the buying process closely. As the relief was designed to provide an immediate stimulus to the property market, the Government does not plan to extend this relief.

■ VAT

Kevin Brennan:

[\[154801\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on maintaining the temporary VAT rate of 5 per cent beyond 31 March 2021.

Alison Thewliss:

[\[155140\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will reduce VAT to 5 per cent for the hair and beauty industry.

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 is due to run until 31 March 2021.

This policy will cost over £2 billion and is a temporary measure. The Government keeps all taxes under review, and all stakeholder views are carefully considered. Any future decisions on tax policy will be made at Budget.

The Government has announced a significant support package to help businesses from a 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.

■ Wind Power: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[154665\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government in respect of Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 in Wales.

Kemi Badenoch:

As manager of the seabed around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, The Crown Estate is responsible for the award of leases for new and existing offshore wind projects, including the current Round 4 exercise. The Crown Estate works independently of government under the mandate set out in the Crown Estate Act 1961.

The Crown Estate has committed to optimise the green energy potential of the nation's world-class offshore resources in supporting the nation's 2050 net zero ambition. On 8 February 2021, The Crown Estate announced six proposed new offshore wind projects, including one in the north Wales region. These will all now progress to environmental assessment known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). These projects together represent just under 8 GW of potential new offshore wind capacity with the opportunity to deliver clean electricity for more than seven million homes and create employment opportunities across the country.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Carer's Allowance**

Stephen Morgan: [\[152623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the carers allowance by £20 per week.

Stephen Morgan: [\[152624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the 35p per week increase in carer's allowance in 2021; and if she will make a statement.

Stephen Morgan: [\[152626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support unpaid carers during the covid-19 pandemic.

Justin Tomlinson:

This Government recognises and values the vital contribution made by carers each and every day in supporting some of the most vulnerable in society including pensioners and those with disabilities. We will provide them with the help and support they need, including through the benefit system.

The support that carers provide has been even more vital during the Covid-19 pandemic when other support services may have been reduced or even closed and the caring role became even harder due to the need to self-isolate or shield the person they care for.

Unpaid carers may be able to apply for Carer's Allowance if they meet the qualifying conditions, such as providing 35 hours of care a week. To ensure that carers already in receipt of Carer's Allowance do not inadvertently stop receiving it because of changes to patterns of care, we have allowed emotional support to count towards the 35 hours of care being provided by the carer as well as relaxing the rules around breaks in care. These measures recognise that carers need extra flexibility in the way they provide care during the current emergency.

This Government continues to protect the value of benefits paid to carers whilst also spending record amounts in real terms. The level of Carer's Allowance is protected by uprating it each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The purpose of benefit uprating is to ensure that the value of benefits stays in line with the general level of prices. Carer's Allowance is increased each April in line with inflation as measured by the CPI for the previous September. For the April 2021 increase we use the September 2020 CPI, which was 0.5 per cent. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.25 a week, meaning around an additional £700 a year for carers. Between 2020/21 and 2025/26 real terms expenditure on Carer's Allowance is forecast to increase by nearly a third (around £1 billion). By 2025/26, the Government is forecast to spend just over £4bn a year on Carer's Allowance.

As of May 2020, there were 1,674 carers in the Portsmouth South constituency that were claiming Carer's Allowance, of which 1,302 were in receipt of Carer's Allowance while 372 had an underlying entitlement to it (which can passport to carer premiums). In 2019/20 we spent approximately £4.7 million on Carer's Allowance there.

Information on the number of people claiming Carer's Allowance by Parliamentary constituency is published and available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

The latest information on benefit expenditure by parliamentary constituency including Carer's Allowance is also published and available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920543/benefit-expenditure-by-parliamentary-constituency-2019-20.xlsx

But Carer's Allowance isn't the only benefit available to carers. Carers have access to the full range of social security benefits according to their circumstances. Income replacement benefits help people and households on lower incomes, and can include a carer premium, currently £37.50 a week. An equivalent additional amount applies in Pension Credit. Universal Credit also includes a carer element at the rate of £162.92 per monthly assessment period. These amounts recognise the additional contribution and responsibilities associated with caring and mean that lower-income carers can receive more money than others who receive these benefits. Between the existing carer-specific support, and the temporary Covid-19 uplift, 270,000 carer households receiving Universal Credit have benefitted from up to an extra £2,990 this financial year.

Stephen Morgan:

[152625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of carers allowance have also been in receipt of universal credit in each of the last four years.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is published in the working age benefit group of the Benefit Combinations statistics, available on the Department's Stat-Xplore website:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users of Stat-Xplore is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Sir Alan Campbell:

[154790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a £20 per week supplement for people receiving carers' allowance as part of Budget 2021.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[155260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of funding a £20 a week supplement for carers entitled to carers' allowance.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[155395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of introducing a £20 a week supplement for carers with an entitlement to carer's allowance as part of Budget 2021.

Justin Tomlinson:

DWP Ministers and officials regularly discuss support for carers with their counterparts across Government. The proposed table of benefits / pension rates for 2021/22, including Carer's Allowance, was published on 4 December 2020 in the House Library, following the Secretary of State's annual review of benefit rates. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.25 a week, meaning around an additional £700 a year for carers. Between 2020/21 and 2025/26 real terms expenditure on Carer's Allowance is forecast to increase by nearly a third (around £1 billion). By 2025/26, the Government is forecast to spend just over £4bn a year on Carer's Allowance.

■ Coronavirus: Ventilation

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[152433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has published on promoting good ventilation in places of work during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: HSE has played a key role in the development of cross-government Covid-secure guidelines for business. These focus on the practical measures that can be adopted to work safely during the pandemic. HSE has developed and published on its website a suite of guidance and information to complement cross-government guidance and provide additional information in relation to health and safety standards that would be expected.

The webpages provide advice to businesses on a range of topics, including how to complete a Covid-secure risk assessment and undertake worker engagement, in addition to more specific topics such as hygiene procedures and ventilation.

This content is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect developing scientific evidence and understanding. As a result of this review HSE expanded and updated guidance on [ventilation during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) in December 2020 and is continuing to review following feedback and further knowledge and understanding and is updated as necessary.

The guidance provides businesses with simple ways to identify areas of the workplace that may be poorly ventilated and provides steps that can be taken to improve ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Pay

Chris Stephens:

[\[155175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department is compliant with the requirement in section 3.1.8 of the Civil Service Management Code that time off with pay for safety representatives will not be set against facility time allowed under existing arrangements.

Mims Davies:

DWP recognises the importance of the Health & Safety representative role and is compliant with the requirements in section 3.1.8 of the Civil Service Management Code. Arrangements are set out in our Employee Relations Framework which has been the subject of extensive consultation with our trade unions and was most recently reviewed in 2020. We allocate official time as necessary for example in response to serious incidents and to enable training for new H&S representatives, we have also treated all Covid related safety work as official time and keep this under regular review.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Andy McDonald:

[\[155051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February to Question 147867, on Employment: Coronavirus, what instructions the Health and Safety Executive provide its inspectors on the serving of prohibition notices to workplaces in which a (a) serious and (b) significant event has taken place.

Mims Davies:

The category labels “serious” and “significant” are used within the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) Enforcement Management Model (EMM). The EMM supports inspectors in considering enforcement options requiring improvements in workplaces but is not relevant to the use of prohibition powers. HSE has not therefore issued instructions to inspectors about the use of EMM in relation to their use of prohibition notices.

HSE takes Covid-19 safety at work very seriously and it is playing a critical role in the national response to the pandemic. The Government has provided additional funding of £14 million to HSE to strengthen its capacity to tackle Covid-19.

Since the start of the pandemic HSE has carried over 127,000 COVID-19 spot checks and responded to over 19,000 concerns. Over 700 checks a day are currently taking place. Spot checks have been targeted in those industries where workers are most likely to be vulnerable to transmission risks.

HSE’s evidence is that more than 90% of the businesses checked have the right precautions in place or are willing to make necessary changes promptly and without the need for enforcement notices. HSE will continue to take enforcement action where appropriate, but the best use of its time and resource to ensure employers

take the right action promptly is often to educate, persuade or require matters to be put right immediately.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[155008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2021 to Question 146856, on Disability Employment Advisors, by how much she plans to increase the number of disability employment advisers during the financial year 2021-22.

Justin Tomlinson:

DWP aims to increase the number of Disability Employment Advisers during the 21/22 financial year. We are currently working through the planning process and will make an announcement once this has been completed.

■ **Food Banks**

Neil Coyle: [\[155063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department concluded its internal review of the factors driving the use of food banks.

Will Quince:

The Department reallocated resources to prioritise work to help the COVID-19 effort.

Throughout this pandemic, this Government has delivered an unprecedented package of support to protect jobs and businesses and, for those in most need, injected billions into the welfare system. The new Covid Winter Grant Scheme builds on that support with an additional £170m for local authorities in England, to support families with children and other vulnerable people with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter.

■ **Jobcentres**

David Linden: [\[155335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in which locations her Department (a) has opened, (b) plans to open, (c) is considering opening a temporary job centre in 2021.

Mims Davies:

DWP is exploring potential options to take premises, on a temporary basis, predominantly in large metropolitan areas where we expect to see increased demand for the Department's services. The Department has opened three temporary Jobcentre sites to date in Oldham, Ashton-under-Lyne and Crawley.

DWP is currently negotiating leases for a significant number of retail and office properties, in major centres, that meet the planning requirements for a jobcentre, with public access, good transport links and accessibility for both colleagues and customers. Location plans cannot be confirmed until commercial negotiations for

each site conclude, however as leases are signed we will write to local MPs and provide the details of all sites on GOV.uk.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Cat Smith:

[\[154647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 103536, how many spot checks have been carried out to ensure placement quality as part of the Kickstart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Enhanced Checking Service currently carry out a pre-payment spot check on all Kickstart jobs as agreed by the grant funding agreement. Where required, deeper investigation is conducted into the quality of the job placement and young person's experience.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[155028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many members of staff in her Department were deployed to (a) process and (b) approve applications for the Kickstart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

As of 18th February 2021, there are 422 members of staff dedicated to processing and approving applications for funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme.

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[155045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to offer exceptions to Kickstart scheme candidates who have turned 25 years of age while waiting for their applications to that scheme to be set up.

Mims Davies:

The Kickstart Scheme is open to all young people aged 16-24 at the time they applied for the Kickstart job, there are no current plans to expand the scheme but we will keep this under review.

Cat Smith:

[\[155158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether any formal training criteria exist as part of the Government's Kickstart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

Guidance for what the employability support should include can be found on the Kickstart gov.uk pages. We carefully assess each bid to ensure Kickstart jobs also support young people to develop basic work skills and build their experience.

The £1500 grant for support can be spent in any way that makes a young person more employable but must be detailed in their bid; this could include payment for equipment, training and/or uniform. Full details of this can be found on the Kickstart gov.uk site.

■ Kickstart Scheme: West Midlands

Liam Byrne: [154575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs have been created by the Kickstart programme in the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to PQ [145013](#).

■ Pensions: Canada

Virginia Crosbie: [155481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Government of Canada on the offer of a reciprocal agreement to uprate frozen overseas pensions.

Guy Opperman:

The Department will respond to the written request from Canada for a reciprocal social security agreement in due course.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Marion Fellows: [155166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that assessors of personal independence payment (PIP) assessments communicate effectively with the appointees of people applying for those benefits.

Justin Tomlinson:

We have interpreted your question to mean what steps her department is taking to ensure that Health Professionals communicate effectively with the appointees of people applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

When a claimant has an appointee, it is flagged in the initial referral to the PIP assessment provider. This ensures that the Health Professional is aware that the claimant has an appointee and that communication, regarding the claimant's PIP assessment, should be made through the appointee as per the guidance in the PIP Assessment Guide (PIPAG).

The department works extensively with its assessment providers to make improvements to guidance to ensure that Health Professionals communicate effectively with appointees of claimants applying for PIP, and the quality of service provided is continuously improved.

The PIPAG is available on GOV.UK. Section 1.15.14 - Appointees can be found in part 1 of the PIPAG at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-assessment-guide-for-assessment-providers>

■ Social Security Benefits

Apsana Begum:

[153400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants have had their (a) personal independence payment and (b) employment and support allowance claims disallowed or closed as a result of a failure to attend or failure to participate notice.

Justin Tomlinson:

In respect to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), I would like to refer you to the detailed statistics that can be found in Stat-Xplore: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

The latest available data on PIP includes clearances split by geographical area (local authority and parliamentary constituency) and by type of clearance (i.e. whether the claim was awarded, disallowed or withdrawn) for both new claims and reassessed claims.

Clearance type details can be broken down by Awarded and Disallowed which includes 'Disallowed post-referral to the AP due to failing to attend assessment appointment'.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

In respect of Employment and Support Allowance, the information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Apsana Begum:

[153401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of people whose (a) personal independence payment and (b) employment support allowance claims were (i) unsuccessful and (ii) closed due to (A) failure to attend and (B) failure to participate who were identified as vulnerable by her Department in the latest period for which figures are available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested for both Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Virginia Crosbie:

[155479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the ONS Updated estimates of coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by disability status, England: 24 January to 20 November 2020, what assessment she has made of the potential benefit of providing an emergency support package to support disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave on 09 February to question number [149299](#).

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[152585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress his Department has made on piloting a new IT system to deliver assessments for personal independence payments and the Work Capability Assessments in employment support allowance and universal credit using a single digital platform.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[155228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has identified the Transformation Area in which the integrated assessment service will be piloted.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[155229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to launch the pilot of its integrated assessment service in autumn 2021.

Justin Tomlinson:

We had started to test a single digital platform in a small number of assessment centres but this was paused due to the impact of COVID-19. We have been reviewing our delivery plans and expect the IT development to form part the work of the new Departmental Transformation Area (DTA). The DTA will provide a safe environment to test, adapt and learn from new ideas and processes before rolling out at a greater scale, and ultimately nationally. The first site in the DTA will be in London and is scheduled to start from April 2021. This approach recognises that our claimants include some of the most vulnerable in society and it is critical that we carefully develop the new integrated health assessment service.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal illnesses

Margaret Greenwood: [\[155101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she has taken to publish guidance for claims made under the special rules for terminal illness including the fact that a DS1500 form is not required; and what steps she has taken to set out the alternative forms of evidence that will be accepted for such claims.

Justin Tomlinson:

DS1500 forms have never been a requirement for a claim under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness but remain the quickest and most appropriate route to gather evidence to support entitlement in these cases. Where it is not possible to supply a DS1500 in support of a terminal illness claim we will continue to consider alternative evidence and work flexibly and quickly with the claimant and/or their clinician(s) to make a quick determination. It is important to note that we have always done, and will continue to do, our utmost to process claims under the special rules as quickly as possible, even if a DS1500 either isn't submitted or cannot be submitted.

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[155102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Government plans to publish its review of the special rules for making a claim for social security where a person is terminally ill.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is committed to delivering an improved benefit system for claimants that are nearing the end of their lives and is working across Government to bring forward proposals following the evaluation. I remain committed to implementing the key areas identified in the evaluation; a consensus to change the six-month rule; improving consistency with other services used by people nearing the end of their lives; and raising awareness of the support that is available.

■ Universal Credit

Chris Stephens:

[\[155177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants living in households with (a) children and (b) disabled people had deductions taken from their claim in the most recent month for which data is available.

Will Quince:

Data on the number of Universal Credit claimants living in households with (a) children and (b) disabled people is not available.

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[152638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent representations she has received from the Secretary of State for Wales on the effect of ending the £20 uplift to universal credit.

Will Quince:

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.

■ Universal Credit: Day Care

David Linden:

[\[153348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the affordability of childcare for universal credit claimants since the judgment made on 22 January 2021 in *R (Salvato) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* [2021] EWHC 102; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

UC childcare is a generous offer - eligible claimants can claim up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month compared to 70% in legacy benefits.

DWP's internal analysis indicates that less than 5% of families/claimants hit the childcare costs cap of £646.35 for one child and £1108.04 for two children.

The Department has been granted permission to appeal. It is therefore not appropriate to comment at this time.

The policy of reimbursing actual childcare costs paid has, as intended, resulted in a significantly lower level of fraud and error than in the legacy system, which was based on projected costs.

David Linden:[\[153351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish statistics on the (a) value of childcare element received by households claiming universal credit and (b) proportion of registered childcare costs that parents have claimed back from her Department.

Will Quince:

There are currently no plans to publish these statistics.

■ Universal Credit: Ethnic Groups**Apsana Begum:**[\[153403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department's timescale is for publication of ethnicity data for universal credit claimants.

Will Quince:

Plans for the publication of ethnicity data can be found in the background information section of the [Universal Credit Statistics Background Information & Methodology](#) document.

■ Universal Credit: Food Banks**Apsana Begum:**[\[153404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of the end of the £20 uplift to universal credit on levels of food bank usage.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

Throughout this pandemic, this Government has delivered an unprecedented package of support to protect jobs and businesses and, for those in most need, injected billions into the welfare system. The new Covid Winter Grant Scheme builds on that support with an additional £170m for local authorities in England, to support families with children and other vulnerable people with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter.

■ Universal Credit: Glasgow

Chris Stephens: [155173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants in Glasgow are in receipt of universal credit.

Chris Stephens: [155174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were in receipt of universal credit at the start of February 2021 in Glasgow.

Will Quince:

The available information on the number of people on Universal Credit, by local authority, is published monthly 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>

Note:

The latest statistics show those on Universal Credit as at 14 January 2021. Statistics for

February 2021 will be published in March 2021.

■ Universal Credit: Wales

Ruth Jones: [152637]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect on the level of food poverty of ending the £20 uplift to universal credit in (a) Newport West and (b) Wales.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

Throughout this pandemic, this Government has delivered an unprecedented package of support to protect jobs and businesses and, for those in most need, injected billions into the welfare system. The new Covid Winter Grant Scheme builds on that support with an additional £170m for local authorities in England, to support families with children and other vulnerable people with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter.

■ Winter Fuel Payments

Olivia Blake: [155482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of making the winter fuel payment available to all people in receipt of state pension for winter 2021-2022.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has made no such assessment.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

EDUCATION

■ New measures to support education recovery

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):

[[HCWS794](#)]

Due to the complexity of the statement the link below is to the web version:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-19/154794>

TREASURY

■ Infrastructure Update

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay):

[[HCWS795](#)]

The Government will deliver the Levelling Up Fund UK-wide using the financial assistance powers in the UK Internal Market Act. This will extend the benefits of funding for priority local infrastructure to local areas in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The £4 billion announced at the Spending Review will now make available £4.8 billion UK-wide between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

It will be allocated competitively and be open to all local areas across the UK to boost growth and spread opportunity.

Making the Fund UK-wide ensures that UK Government can target funding more efficiently and responsibly between different parts of the country. It will enable the Government to take a strategic approach across the UK, allocating funding in all parts of the country irrespective of administrative borders.

Further details on how the Fund will operate will be published at Budget.