

**Daily Report****Wednesday, 17 March 2021**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 17 March 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 17 March 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

■ Administration of Justice: Coronavirus

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[167190\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps he is taking to increase public understanding of the law during the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

Public understanding of the law is even more essential during this unique time when individuals are facing unprecedented challenges. Public legal education is vital to help people to understand the law, their rights, and their responsibilities, and I am proud to work closely with the legal and third sector as part of my Public Legal Education Committee to support and promote this work.

The Attorney General's Office has also recently supported Justice Week this year, delivered digitally at the start of March. It is a testament to the sector's commitment to supporting the public in times of crisis that pro bono support and public legal education across the country has continued in spite of the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Crown Prosecution Service

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[167187\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what Departmental oversight is exercised over the decisions of the CPS Complex Casework Units.

Lucy Frazer:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Complex Casework Units (CCUs) undertake some of the most complex and serious casework handled by the CPS. A recent report published by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) found that CCUs are staffed by highly dedicated, skilled and professional teams who deliver high quality casework, often in demanding circumstances.

CCUs are overseen through a structure of experienced legal managers including Unit Heads, Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutors and Chief Crown Prosecutors. The Report identified evidence of effective and regular meetings and conversations between lawyers and managers about casework. They also identified evidence of national oversight with the referral of relevant cases being made to Headquarters for consideration.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Government Departments: Contracts

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[163144\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to conduct an internal review of contracts issued by the Government during the covid-19 outbreak.

Julia Lopez:

The National Audit Office has published its [report](#) relating to government procurement during the Covid-19 pandemic covering the period up to 31 July 2020. This includes, among other things, an examination of procurement activity during the pandemic and the Government's management of procurement risks. The report has been scrutinised by the [Public Accounts Committee](#) in the usual way.

Government also published the Green Paper consultation on 15 December on reform of the UK's public procurement regulations. The Green Paper proposals put value for money and transparency at the heart of the new approach, and will cut red tape, reduce bureaucracy and unleash wider social benefits from public money spent on procurement.

Cabinet Office has also conducted some internal work to examine procurements during the pandemic, commissioning an independent expert review of certain communications contracts, the Boardman Review. The report and recommendations have been published on gov.uk.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Farms

Jim Shannon:

[\[168926\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church of England is taking to lengthen the terms of farm business tenancies on its agricultural estate to encourage (a) farm business resilience and (b) improved environmental management.

Andrew Selous:

The Church Commissioners and their agents always consider the potential length of a farm business tenancy (FBT) on a case-by-case basis, with potential long-term tenancies offered when suitable.

To encourage farm business resilience, the Commissioners pay compensation for improvements where appropriate and encourage good husbandry of the land. Within FBT clauses, obligations on tenants to keep farm books and records and at all times to maintain and establish the maximum entitlements with respect to the holding further provide for sustainable businesses.

To encourage improved environmental management, we prevent the removal of topsoil and stipulate that watercourses must be kept clear from obstruction. In addition, for longer-term tenancies, soil analysis and testing is carried out at the beginning and end of the tenancy to ensure soil health is maintained to a satisfactory standard. We welcome approaches from tenants to discuss environmental schemes and, at such time, consider these proposals within the context of the wider holding.

COP26

■ Climate Change: International Cooperation

Wera Hobhouse: [\[161831\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether the UK will negotiate as part of the EU grouping in COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Our European partners remain important allies in driving efforts towards a net zero, climate resilient future. I recently visited Brussels and Paris, and have had positive conversations with the European Commission and several Member State governments, including Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Italy and Spain, to discuss our cooperation ahead of COP26. We look forward to working closely with the EU and all negotiating groups and parties to ensure COP26 is a success.

The UK left the EU climate change negotiating group upon exiting the European Union. At COP26, the UK's priority will be impartially presiding over the negotiations.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[169081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that members of the British armed forces serving overseas will be able to receive a covid-19 vaccination as soon as they are eligible for that vaccination.

James Heappey:

No Service Personnel will be disadvantaged by their Overseas Service. Vaccines will be made available during their deployments in line with JCVI priorities or they will be vaccinated before they deploy.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[169084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to encourage members of the armed forces to take-up their covid-19 vaccinations when eligible.

James Heappey:

Defence's vaccination policy for all vaccines, including COVID-19, is voluntary and administered under the principles of informed consent. Defence is delivering a

comprehensive communications programme directed by its medical and scientific experts, including Q&As and engagement events, to dispel myths and misinformation surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine. We continue to provide advice, both through the Chain of Command and Defence Medical Services, to address any specific issues or concerns that personnel may have.

■ **Falkland Islands: Military Bases**

Luke Pollard:

[\[166545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to offset the carbon emissions from British military activity on the Falkland Islands.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence prefers not to use offsets to deliver on our wider Departmental emission commitment. We are prioritising energy efficiency and decarbonisation initiatives to lower our carbon emissions.

■ **Queens Flight**

Gareth Thomas:

[\[165430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the future of the Royal Flight; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

No 32 (The Royal) Squadron is an honorary title bestowed for service. The Squadron has a wider military Command Support Air Transport role. Royal and VVIP transport is now provided through a number of assets which conduct a range of activities, most notably Voyager. The RAF will always consult with appropriate stakeholders in making arrangements for Royal and VVIP transport.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Data Protection: Japan**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[165471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether UK citizens' data is afforded the same degree of protection in Japan under the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement as EU data is under the Japan-EU Free Trade Agreement.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The EU-Japan agreement does not include data provisions. There is simply a review clause in the free flow of data article that commits the parties to assess the need for the inclusion of provisions on the free flow of data in the agreement within 3 years.

UK citizens' data protection rights are not impacted by the agreement with Japan and UK data protection standards will not change as a result of the agreement. The UK

data protection regime - enshrined in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR - will continue to apply.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[165472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, (a) whether UK citizens' data has the same protections from onward transfer as EU data and (b) how UK citizens data protection will be enforced.

Mr John Whittingdale:

UK citizens will enjoy the same protections for their personal data as they did before the agreement. Nothing in the UK-Japan Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA) changes the current position in relation to onward transfers of UK personal data from Japan. Transfers of personal data from the UK to Japan are governed by the preserved effect of the EU's adequacy decision for Japan. This recognises that the Japanese data regime has appropriate protections in place when personal data is transferred from Japan to other countries, including enforcement mechanisms.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[165473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if UK citizens' data could be transferred under the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement from Japan to third countries with lower levels of data protection.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Transfers of personal data from the UK to third countries are regulated under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, not free trade agreements.

The UK-Japan CEPA does not change the current position in relation to onward transfers of UK personal data from Japan. Transfers of personal data from the UK to Japan are governed by the preserved effect of the EU's adequacy decision for Japan. This recognises that the Japanese data regime provides appropriate protections when personal data is transferred from Japan to third countries.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[165474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to trigger UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement public policy exemptions if UK citizens' data was to be transferred to third countries with lower levels of protection under the agreement.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK is preserving the effect of the EU's adequacy decision for Japan on a transitional basis because robust protections are in place for the international transfer of personal data. The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) does not change this position in relation to onward transfers of UK personal data from Japan.

The CEPA article on cross-border flows (8.84.2) states that exceptions to the flow of data can be made to achieve “legitimate public policy objectives”. This means that if justified, either party could take action to restrict data flows.

CEPA addresses data flows between the UK and Japan and not onward transfers to other jurisdictions.

Emily Thornberry:

[165475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of a potential ban on arbitrary or unjustifiable restrictions on data flows within the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and the UK's GDPR regime.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We are confident the UK GDPR is compliant with the terms of the legitimate public policy exception in the cross-border flows article (8.84) of the UK-Japan CEPA. The UK GDPR requirements are not arbitrary nor unjustifiably discriminatory, and ensure a high standard of protection for personal data transferred outside the UK.

Emily Thornberry:

[165476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether UK citizens enjoy individual rights to reasonable explanation and reasonable inferences on how their data is used under the exemptions of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) obliges both parties to adopt or maintain a legal framework that provides for the protection of the personal information of the users of electronic commerce, which includes publishing information on protections as well as ways that individuals can pursue remedies and businesses can comply with legal requirements.

CEPA does not change existing protection for UK citizens' personal data, as set out in the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, including the right to be informed about the collection and use of their personal data

The most relevant exemption for data protection - in the cross-border transfer of information article (Article 8.84) in the CEPA - allows the UK to adopt measures restricting data flows to achieve a legitimate public policy objective, such as personal data protection, provided the conditions attached to the use of the exemption are satisfied.

Emily Thornberry:

[165479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the long-term compatibility of UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement data rules and the draft data adequacy decision taken by the EU with respect to the UK.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The European Commission published draft adequacy decisions for the UK on 19 February 2021. These decisions follow a thorough assessment of the UK's legislation and regulatory framework for personal data.

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is compatible with these decisions because CEPA's provisions do not affect the data protection standards set out in the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, including those concerning the cross border transfer of personal data.

The UK recognises the importance of data protection to enable trading partners to build trust through transparent treatment of personal data and to ensure that data is able to flow in an uninterrupted manner.

Emily Thornberry:[\[165480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how the data provisions of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement affect the data protections UK citizens are afforded if they are employed by a company based in Japan.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) does not affect existing data protection standards in the UK or Japan. Further, the UK has preserved on a transitional basis the effect of the EU's adequacy assessment of Japan's data protection regime, which recognises that Japan offers an adequate level of data protection. This allows personal data to flow freely between the two economies on the basis of strong data protection guarantees.

The data provisions in CEPA do not affect the scope of the UK GDPR or the Data Protection Act 2018. If a Japanese company is processing employees' personal data in the context of an establishment in the UK, or otherwise meets the requirements of the territorial scope provisions of the UK GDPR, then the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 will apply to the processing.

■ Internet: Japan**Emily Thornberry:**[\[165478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK's commitments under the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on enacting future online harms legislation.

Caroline Dinenage:

This Government is committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to be online and the best place to start and grow a digital business. We stand by our online harms commitment and nothing agreed in trade deals will affect that. The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement does not impact the government's ability to enact legislation to tackle online harms.

In December we published the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper, which set out the expectations on companies to keep their users safe online. The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework set out in the full government response, will be ready this year.

■ Internet: Safety

Afzal Khan:

[\[165665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of using the forthcoming Online Safety Bill to legislate for what constitutes harmful but legal online content following engagement with stakeholders and civil society.

Caroline Dinanage:

The forthcoming Online Safety Bill will require all companies in scope to assess the likelihood of children accessing their services, and to provide additional protections from harmful material for children, where appropriate. Companies providing high risk, high reach services will be required to take steps in respect of legal but harmful content and activity that is accessed by adults.

The government will set out priority categories of legal but harmful material for adults, and legal but harmful content and activity impacting children in secondary legislation.

■ Technology: Japan

Emily Thornberry:

[\[165477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the source code, software and algorithm provisions of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on the Government's right to regulate new technologies.

Matt Warman:

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership includes a provision that ensures UK businesses will not be forced to share their software's source code, or algorithms expressed in that source code, as a condition of entering the Japanese market. This provides protection for UK company trade secrets and allows companies to retain any competitive advantage that their source code provides.

The agreement does not prohibit all regulatory intervention in respect of new technologies and is designed with future-proofing in mind. The permissible interventions include setting standards, supplier selection, reviewing coding procedures, inspecting underlying data-sets, and prose explanations as to how an algorithm reached a decision.

In designing the exceptions to the source code provision, the UK and Japan have taken a technology and regulator neutral approach. We are convinced that this approach is best to ensure the provision and the exceptions meet both the current and future needs of UK regulators.

EDUCATION■ **Adult Education: Finance**

Robert Halfon: [167853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department is making available to independent adult education training providers not in receipt of funding from the Adult Education Budget and who are meeting increased learner demand.

Gillian Keegan:

The department currently has an open opportunity on the government's Contract Finder for the procurement of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded Adult Education Budget (AEB) contract for service. The opportunity was published on 5 February 2021 and the deadline for the receipt of the completed tenders is 10:00 on 22 March 2021. For more details are published here:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/fb94e7c6-b8be-4e89-b938-0058e3fca3dd?origin=SearchResults&p=1>.

The adult education budget procurement will award ESFA funded AEB contracts for services for the delivery of adult education and training to learners in England that are resident outside of the devolved areas. This is an open procedure, and any supplier may submit a tender.

■ **Apprentices**

Tim Farron: [166366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how portable apprenticeships will be defined.

Tim Farron: [166367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how portable apprenticeships will operate.

Gillian Keegan:

We are committed to supporting greater use of apprenticeships in sectors where flexible working practices are commonplace, including short periods of project-based employment.

To support these sectors, we are launching a £7 million fund to support the creation and expansion of apprenticeship training agencies which offer portable apprenticeships, enabling apprentices to move between different host employers as they complete their training.

We continue to work closely with the creative and agricultural industries in increasing the portability of apprenticeships and will set out further details in due course.

■ Children: Day Care

Zarah Sultana:

[\[167965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the introduction of the 30 hours free childcare policy on the number of nurseries in England.

Vicky Ford:

The 30 hours free childcare policy was introduced in September 2017 and is an entitlement for working parents of 3 year olds and 4 year olds. It aims to help working parents with the costs of childcare so they can take up paid work if they want to or can work additional hours.

Approximately 345,000 children were in a 30 hours place in January 2020. The Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2019 showed that the majority of providers with children aged 3 to 4 registered at their setting at the time of the survey were offering 30 hours (90% of group-based providers, 70% of school-based providers and 80% of childminders).

The number of providers offering childcare on non-domestic premises, which includes nurseries, on the Early Years Register (EYR) has seen a small reduction of 5% from 31 August 2015 to 31 August 2020.

On 31 August 2020, there were 1.3 million childcare places offered by providers on the EYR, including nurseries and those on domestic premises such as childminders. There is no noticeable change in this trend around 2017, when the 30 hours policy was introduced.

Ofsted data indicates that, despite around 14,500 providers having closed between March 2015 and March 2020, there are approximately 15,400 more childcare places, with the majority of closed providers being childminders.

The evaluation of the first year of the national roll-out of 30 hours of free childcare found that provision expanded among providers delivering the extended hours through increased occupancy and higher use of staff. There was no evidence of any immediate adverse effect on other funded or paid provision. It also found that a high proportion (76%) of providers delivering the funded entitlement were willing and able to offer the extended hours.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare places in their area for all children, including children benefitting from any of the department's free early education entitlements.

■ GCSE: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[165593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what specific support his Department will provide to help enable current in Year 10 pupil to be adequately prepared for GCSEs at the end of next academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education and are committed to helping pupils make up lost education due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

We know that it is important that pupils in this cohort are able to obtain a grade safely and fairly and we will continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on all pupils to ensure that those due to take exams in 2022 are supported to move on to the next stage of their lives fairly.

The Department has appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to oversee the long-term plan to help schools support pupils make up their education over the course of this Parliament. Sir Kevan will engage with parents, pupils, and teachers in the development of this broader approach and review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on education. We will share further details in due course.

As an immediate step, on 24 February 2021, the Department committed an additional £700 million to support summer schools, tutoring, early language interventions and additional support to schools to help pupils make up their education. This builds on the £1 billion catch-up package announced in June 2020, which included a Catch-up Premium, shared across state primary and secondary schools to support schools to make up for lost teaching time over this academic year. It also includes the National Tutoring Programme which provides schools with access to high-quality, subsidised tuition in this academic year and next.

■ Music: Education**Lisa Nandy:**[\[167863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to confirm the levels of Government funding for music education hubs in England for the 2021-22 financial year.

Lisa Nandy:[\[167864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made on the development of a refreshed national plan for music education; and what his timeframe is for the publication of that plan.

Nick Gibb:

The Government believes that the arts are an essential part of a broad and balanced education and that high-quality arts education should not be the preserve of the elite, but the entitlement of every single child.

Music Education Hubs have a vital role to play not only in core school music but also ensuring children have access to all the benefits of a wider musical education through instrumental lessons and ensembles. They have acted swiftly and innovatively to support schools through the COVID-19 outbreak, including the continuation of continuing professional development to classroom teachers.

Following the one-year Spending Review settlement, the Department intends to fund Music Education Hubs for the financial year 2021-22 and the budget will be announced shortly. Our partner organisations have been updated on this matter, and further details on specific funding allocations for each hub will follow.

A Call for Evidence was launched to support the refresh of the national plan. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, analysis of the Call for Evidence and the refresh of the national plan is currently on hold. The Department remains committed to the refresh and the results of the Call for Evidence, and the refreshed plan will be published in due course.

■ Nurseries: Closures

Zarah Sultana: [\[167964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of nurseries that have closed (a) in the two years prior to March 2020, (b) during the covid-19 outbreak and (c) in the most deprived areas of England.

Vicky Ford:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance

Zarah Sultana: [\[167963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the long-term funding needs of early years education and care.

Zarah Sultana: [\[167966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing specific financial support for nurseries during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

The government has supported nurseries, pre-schools, and childminders during a very uncertain time.

In March 2020, we confirmed that we would continue to pay funding to local authorities for the free early education entitlements for two, three and four-year-olds, providing reassurance and financial support for early years settings in light of decreased demand as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding continued to local authorities until the end of the autumn term at broadly the levels they would have expected to see had there been no COVID-19 outbreak.

For spring term 2021, we are funding local authorities based on their January 2021 census, but if attendance rose after the census was taken and where a local authority can provide evidence for increased attendance during the spring term, we will top-up local authorities to up to 85% of their January 2020 census level. Further guidance for

local authorities, setting out details as to how the 85% top-up scheme works, together with information on our approach for funding the summer term 2021, will be shared soon.

In addition, we have supported the early years sector with financial and business support, including through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and business rates relief, both of which will continue into the financial year 2021-22, as well as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan and the Self-employment Income Support Scheme. Further, eligible nurseries may also access the new Recovery Loans, available from 6 April 2021, as set out by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 3 March 2021. The new Recovery Loan Scheme will replace the Business Interruption Loan Scheme which is due to end on 31 March 2021.

The government continues to support families with their childcare costs. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced at the Spending Review a £44 million investment in the 2021-22 financial year, for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers. Specifically, this will allow them to increase the hourly funding rates for all local authorities by 8p an hour for the two-year-old entitlement and, for the vast majority of areas, by 6p an hour for the three and four-year-old entitlement. This will pay for a rate increase that is higher than the costs nurseries may face from the uplift to the national living wage in April.

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

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Zarah Sultana:

[\[165682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing phased returns for school children of different ages.

Nick Gibb:

As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, set out in his statement to Parliament on 22 February, based on the Government's assessment of the current data against its four tests for relaxing restrictions, it was possible for children to return to schools from 8 March 2021. All secondary pupils will be offered testing from 8 March and those who consent to testing should return to face to face education following their first negative test result. The Government has prioritised education as we cautiously begin to relax restrictions. It is vital for all pupils to attend school to minimise the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their education, wellbeing, and wider development.

Opening schools to all pupils is a national priority. As a result of the efforts the country has made, it is now possible for schools to welcome back pupils in all year groups, in addition to the vulnerable children and young people and the children of

critical workers who have continued to attend face to face education since the start of the spring term. At every stage since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, our decisions have been informed by the scientific and medical evidence, both on the risks of COVID-19 infection, transmission, and illness, and on the known risks to children and young people not attending school and college, balancing public health and education considerations. The Government has published its COVID-19 children, young people and education settings evidence summary which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-summary-covid-19-children-young-people-and-education-settings>.

To prepare for full reopening, schools should update their risk assessment and ensure they are implementing the system of controls in order to minimise the risk of infection. The system of controls is described in full within the published schools guidance which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance>.

The Government's Roadmap is a step-by-step plan to ease restrictions in England cautiously, starting with schools and colleges, taking into consideration the scientific evidence. The Roadmap sets out indicative, "no earlier than" dates for the steps which are five weeks apart. These dates are driven by the data; before taking each further step, the Government will review the latest data on the impact of the previous step against its four tests. The Government's Roadmap can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963491/COVID-19_Response_-_Spring_2021.pdf.

■ Universities: China

Andrew Rosindell:

[166338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will take steps to undertake a risk assessment of increasing collaboration, through funding, between UK universities and China.

Michelle Donelan:

UK universities are international at their core and we encourage them to collaborate with international partners. However, it is important that universities remain security-minded in all international collaboration and are alert to the possible risks associated with dependence on a single source of funding, whether that is from a single organisation or from a single nation.

Following my request, Universities UK published sector guidelines on managing risks in internationalisation in October 2020. The guidelines state that due diligence should be conducted on all international collaborations, including investments, donations, and other sources of income. In my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education's guidance to the Office for Students, he also asked the regulator to monitor how universities adopt these guidelines as well as continue to support the

sector manage the risks to the reputation, integrity, and sustainability of individual institutions.

We also continue to work closely with other government departments, particularly the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which has a strong interest in ensuring that research collaborations properly address security considerations.

■ Veterans: Education

Jack Lopresti:

[165505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to enable veterans to study for educational and vocational qualifications.

Gillian Keegan:

While there are no specific eligibility provisions for veterans within the Adult Education Budget, they do have the same rights to access educational and vocational qualifications as other individuals.

Residency eligibility criteria mean that an individual is required to have resided in England and have three-year ordinary residency in the UK and/or European Economic Area, depending on their nationality. Armed forces personnel and their family members posted outside the UK are classed as ordinarily resident in the UK and, where relevant, this may contribute towards the three years ordinary residency requirement, provided they are now residing in England and the learning is taking place in England.

Individuals who meet the residency eligibility criteria can access provision including fully funded courses in English and maths, for adults who need to improve their literacy and numeracy, fully funded first full Level 2 and/or Level 3 for learners aged 19 to 23 and fully funded specified digital skills qualifications for adults with no/low digital skills.

They will also be able to access a range of provision funded through the National Skills Fund:

- We will invest £95 million from the National Skills Fund to support all adults to achieve their first full Level 3 qualification, which is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or two full A-Levels. Currently, adults between the ages of 19 to 23 are eligible for full funding for their first full Level 3. This offer will ensure that adults aged 24 and over are now able to access their first full, fully funded, Level 3 qualification.
- We will target this Level 3 adult offer on sector subject areas that have strong outcomes at Level 3 linked to labour market need. The offer includes a range of qualifications that are valuable across the economy in multiple sectors, for example, digital skills, accountancy and business skills. This forms part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee and provides adults, including veterans, with an opportunity to gain these qualifications at any stage of their lives.

- Complementing the Level 3 adult offer, Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Skills Bootcamps will address the needs of adults aged 19 and over, providing them with opportunities to retrain, update or formalise their skills or acquire specialist skills.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Beetles: Pest Control

James Cartlidge:

[\[165619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help farmers respond to Wireworm outbreaks; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The management of wireworm outbreaks predominantly relies on non-chemical control such as consolidating seed beds to help restrict its movement and controlling grass weeds to reduce its food source. This non-chemical approach is integral to integrated pest management (IPM) which can help control all pest species. The Government has put IPM at the centre of its draft revised UK National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. The draft plan sets out how we will support farmers, land managers, amateur users, and amenity users to maximise non-chemical control and increase uptake of IPM approaches. It also sets out how we would do this, by: improving education, knowledge sharing platforms, and advisory mechanisms; considering how to offset financial risks that could be associated with uptake of an IPM approach; and investing in research and development on alternative crop protection options. The consultation on the draft plan closed on 26 February and the final plan will be published later in the year.

■ Dogs: Imports

Sir John Hayes:

[\[165441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of proposals of the Dogs Trust to increase the minimum age at which puppies can be imported into the UK from 15 weeks to six months in order to make them less desirable for purchase and make the illegal puppy trade less lucrative for criminals.

Victoria Prentis:

The end of the transition period has opened up new opportunities for managing our own pet travel and commercial importation rules. We are actively listening to the concerns of stakeholders and the Government is considering options to strengthen our efforts to tackle puppy smuggling and prevent the low-welfare importation and movement of these animals including looking at the minimum age of dogs entering Great Britain (GB).

These options will take into consideration the results from our latest disease risk assessments for GB, recommendations of stakeholders such as the British Veterinary Association and Dogs Trust, and recent Parliamentary work from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee.

■ Dogs: Smuggling

Sir John Hayes: [\[165439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on increasing the maximum penalties for the illegal importation of dogs into the UK.

Sir John Hayes: [\[165440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the increasing the maximum penalties for the illegal importation of dogs into the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the issue of puppy smuggling and other illegal importations of pets very seriously. It is an abhorrent trade which causes suffering to animals and puts the health of pets and people in the UK at risk.

Now the transition period has ended, we have the opportunity to manage our own pet travel and commercial importation rules. We are actively listening to the concerns of stakeholders, such as the RSCPA, the British Veterinary Association and Dogs Trust, and recent Parliamentary work from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, as we consider a range of recommendations in this area.

■ Environmental Land Management Scheme: Biofuels

Luke Pollard: [\[165667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to include the growing of bioenergy feedstocks such as woodland and energy crops as recognised activities for farmers and landowners under the Environment Land Management Scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has made a commitment to develop and publish a new cross-government Biomass Strategy by 2022. Defra is working closely with BEIS on this. The strategy will consider how biomass should be sourced and used across the economy to best contribute to our net zero target. There is evidence and widespread acceptance that biomass, including bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, has a key role to play in achieving net zero. We are looking carefully at how to ensure any potential future policy to increase the supply of domestically sourced biomass, such as woody biomass or energy crops such as miscanthus, minimises any potential impacts on food security and the environment, as well as taking advantage of any co-benefits. We will also consider whether our future schemes that pay farmers to improve the

environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions can play a role in supporting the delivery of the strategy.

■ **Environmental Land Management Scheme: Organic Farming**

Daniel Zeichner:

[165578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he will take to help ensure that organic farms receive adequate support during the roll-out of the Environmental Land Management scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

In November 2020 we published 'The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024'. This confirmed our intention to launch three schemes that will reward environmental land management: The Sustainable Farming Incentive; Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery.

We are working to ensure that the design of these schemes reflects the full diversity of environmentally sustainable techniques that are already producing environmental benefits, including organics practices.

We published further detail of the Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot earlier this month. The Sustainable Farming Incentive is intended to be open and accessible to all farmers and to reward farmers fairly for environmental goods generated across all land types and farm management systems, including organic farms. Throughout the pilot, for which expressions of interest are now open, we will be working with hundreds of farmers to ensure that it works for all farming systems. We will also be working with the accreditation schemes to see how membership could help with earned recognition under the future environmental land management schemes and what role the bodies operating these accreditation schemes might play.

We will publish more information on the Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes later this year.

■ **Export Health Certificates: Northern Ireland**

Daniel Zeichner:

[155075]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of Export Health Certificates that will be required each month for movements of live animals or animal products between Great Britain and Northern Ireland after the grace period ends on 1 April 2021.

Daniel Zeichner:

[157339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate the Animal and Plant Health Agency has made of the number of Export Health Certificates that will be required per month for movements of live animals or animal products from Great Britain to Northern Ireland once the grace period ends on 1 April 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

We estimate demand for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for movements to Northern Ireland may increase by between 70,000 and 150,000 per year (taking into account the Scheme for Temporary Agri-food Movements to Northern Ireland (STAMNI under which authorised traders do not require EHCs). Up to 70 FTE Official Veterinarians (OVs) may be required to certify these EHCs. The actual OV requirement will depend on multiple factors, many of which we cannot quantify with certainty. The number of OVs qualified to certify exports of products of animal origin has increased from 600 in February 2019 to more than 1,700 currently.

Food: Production**Zarah Sultana:**[\[164646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to help reduce global greenhouse gas emissions from food production in the run up to COP26.

Rebecca Pow:

Sustainable agriculture and land use are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and objectives of the Paris Agreement. The 2019 IPCC land-use report set out the critical role that sustainable land use must play in climate mitigation and building resilience. The COP26 Nature Campaign aims to raise the profile of this agenda, building on the Just Rural Transition launched at the UN Climate Action Summit and providing a platform to highlight actions that leading countries are taking to deliver change.

Reaching our Net Zero target is one of this Government's top priorities. We know that this will be a challenge, requiring action across the economy. It will mean changes to the way land is managed to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. We will support the sector to make these changes through the schemes set out in the Agricultural Transition Plan.

The Agricultural Transition Plan published on 30 November 2020 outlined how the Government will support farmers and land managers by investing the money freed up from phasing out direct payments to pay for improvements to the environment, improve animal health and welfare and reduce carbon emissions. Simultaneously, we need to protect and increase our carbon stores, increasing afforestation and peat restoration rates across England, whilst supporting the adaptiveness and resilience of these ecosystems to risks which may arise under a changing climate. Our new environmental land management schemes will help deliver on this and include the Sustainable Farming Incentive, a universal scheme open to all farmers, which will support sustainable approaches to farm husbandry to deliver for the environment, such as actions to improve soil health and water quality, enhance hedgerows and promote integrated pest management.

We will also take steps to reduce emissions through our animal health and welfare schemes and transitional support schemes. For example, we will support action to

identify and eliminate Bovine Viral Diarrhoea, which raises greenhouse gas emissions from cattle. And we will provide grants towards the cost of equipment, technology and infrastructure that will improve farmers' efficiency, benefiting the environment. These could include precision agriculture and low-emission nutrient application equipment.

■ **Horses: Manure**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[165706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the estimated cost to local authorities of clearing horse manure from public roads and footpaths, in the last year.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[165707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of fines for statutory nuisance caused by horse fouling on roads and footpaths have been issued in the last year.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[165708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to oblige horse riders clean up manure from footpaths and roads.

Rebecca Pow:

Local councils have a duty to ensure that public areas are kept clear of litter and refuse. This includes removing horse foul from certain types of land. Local authorities are not required to report on their specific costs related to cleaning horse manure from public roads and footpaths, and Defra has made no assessment of these costs.

Defra does not keep any information on offences or fines for statutory nuisances as local authorities are the main enforcers of the statutory nuisance regime. Individual local authorities may keep records of statutory nuisance offences and fines, but these are not held nationally by Defra.

There is no law requiring riders to pick up after their horses and we have no plans to introduce such a law. Manure from healthy horses is generally free of the pathogens that are found in dog faeces, such as the worm that carries toxocariasis, and there is not enough evidence of widespread nuisance from horse fouling to suggest that special legislative controls are necessary.

Councils already have powers to issue Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). PSPOs allow councils to deal with a particular nuisance or problem arising in an area which have "a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality" by imposing conditions on the use of that area.

Those who breach the terms of a PSPO may be prosecuted in a magistrates' court, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction. Alternatively, the council can issue a fixed penalty notice of up to £100. It is up to each council to decide how and to what extent they use these powers.

■ National Food Strategy Review

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[165575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Government plans to publish a response to the recommendations of Part 1 of the National Food Strategy.

Victoria Prentis:

Henry Dimbleby was appointed to lead the independent review of the food system in June 2019. This review will inform the Government's Food Strategy.

Part One of Henry Dimbleby's independent review of the food system was published on 29 July 2020 and contained recommendations on trade and food security in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government has already acted on these recommendations, with the announcement of the Covid Winter Support package on 8 November 2020 that ensured vulnerable households would not go hungry, and with announcements on trade last year, which included putting the Trade and Agriculture Commission onto a statutory footing.

Part Two of the independent review will be published in 2021. We are continuing to engage with Henry Dimbleby and his team, and are committed to responding with a White Paper within six months of the release of his second and final report.

■ Veterinary Medicine: Key Workers

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[164659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will add veterinary workers to the list of critical workers.

Victoria Prentis:

Schools in England reopened for all pupils on 8 March 2021. The Cabinet Office previously confirmed that only vets providing services in the food chain are included as critical workers and had been able to continue to send their children to school prior to that date. This includes veterinary surgeons working in abattoirs and meat processing plants, at border control posts, and attending to livestock production.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Africa: Human Rights

Stephen Doughty:

[\[167869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions the UK Representative to the UN Human Rights Council has had with relevant stakeholders on the alleged human rights abuses in (a) Uganda, (b) Ethiopia, (c) Eritrea, (d) Tanzania and (e) Nigeria in the last three months.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Julian Braithwaite, and the UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Rita French, regularly hold discussions with relevant stakeholders on ongoing and emerging human rights situations of concern, including with representatives of other governments, international organisations, human rights defenders and other members of civil society.

In addition to discussions with stakeholders, the UK also speaks out publicly against human rights violations and abuses through the Human Rights Council, including during its current (46th) regular session which began on 22 February. On 24 February at an Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Eritrea, Ambassador French delivered the UK's statement expressing concern at the involvement of Eritrean forces in Tigray and at reports of human rights violations and abuses by all those involved in the conflict. The statement called for independent, international investigations into allegations of human rights abuses and violations, to ensure that perpetrators of proven allegations are held to account. On 26 February, in our Item 2 General Debate statement, we called on the Nigerian authorities to ensure those responsible for alleged human rights violations during the #EndSARs protests were held to account. The UK also joined a joint statement on Ethiopia with 41 other countries in which we condemned in the strongest terms the reported killings of civilians in Tigray, called on Ethiopia to grant full access to the region for unhindered humanitarian access and assistance and to protect the human rights of all people in the conflict-afflicted zone, and also called for the withdrawal of all Eritrean troops from Ethiopia.

■ Armenia: Azerbaijan**Catherine West:**[\[167927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the durability of the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government welcomed the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I have been in regular contact with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers since the outbreak of hostilities in September. During recent visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan, I encouraged both sides to abide by the 10 November trilateral peace deal and settle all outstanding matters through talks under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group, as the most effective way to secure peace and stability in the region.

■ Armenia: Foreign Relations**Catherine West:**[\[167924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what engagement he has had with the Armenian Government following recent protests in that country.

Wendy Morton:

In the immediate aftermath of the public comments by Armenian military figures which prompted the protests, I underlined to the Armenian Foreign Minister the UK's continued support for Armenia's democracy. We continue to engage the Armenian authorities via the British Embassy in Yerevan, to reiterate our support for the democratically elected Government in Armenia and for the right of the Armenian people to protest peacefully.

■ China: Uighurs**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[166369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Canadian counterpart on the vote in the Canadian Parliament to deem the actions of China on the Uighur population as genocide.

Nigel Adams:

The Government remains gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. The UK plays a leading role in holding China to account for its human rights violations in the region, working closely with international partners, including Canada. We regularly discuss our concerns and related questions of policy with Canada, most recently in a call on 4 March 2021 between the Foreign Secretary and Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau. It is the long-standing policy of the British Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court.

Shabana Mahmood:[\[166370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK security co-operation with Canada of the decision of the Canadian Parliament to deem the actions of China on the Uighur population as genocide.

Nigel Adams:

We have taken note of the motion passed by the Canadian House of Commons relating to Xinjiang, though this has no impact on our security cooperation with Canada. The UK continues to play a leading role in holding China to account for its gross human rights abuses in Xinjiang, working closely with international partners including Canada. It is the long-standing policy of the British Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court, rather than for Governments or non-judicial bodies.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[166371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision of the Canadian Parliament to deem the actions of China on the Uighur population as genocide.

Nigel Adams:

We have taken note of the motion passed by the Canadian House of Commons relating to Xinjiang. The UK continues to play a leading role in holding China to account for its gross human rights abuses in Xinjiang, working closely with international partners including Canada. It is the long-standing policy of the British Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court, rather than for Governments or non-judicial bodies.

■ **Commonwealth: Overseas Aid**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[167870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the change in the level of total Official Development Assistance to eligible Commonwealth member states in the last reporting year.

Nigel Adams:

For the last reporting year available (2019), the UK's bilateral Official Development Assistance to Commonwealth countries was approximately £1.888 billion. This was an increase of over 8% on the previous year. Detail on UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in 2020 is not yet available. In the autumn, FCDO will publish "Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2020". This publication will contain detailed breakdowns including UK bilateral ODA to Commonwealth countries.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Darren Henry:

[\[166583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure (a) his Department's staff and (b) expat communities abroad receive a covid-19 vaccine.

Nigel Adams:

We are closely following other countries' plans to roll out vaccines. We are providing information through Travel Advice pages and 'Living In' guides on gov.uk to inform British nationals of healthcare options available to them and how they can receive a vaccine locally. The UK is playing a leading international role to ensure global access to COVID-19 vaccines. For example, we have contributed £548m to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to ensure that the 92 most vulnerable economies have access to COVID-19 vaccines and I [Minister Adams] am delighted that this is starting to deliver.

In close alignment with the UK national programme, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ministry Of Defence are working together to provide

access to Covid-19 vaccines for overseas staff and dependants for whom HMG has duty of care.

Catherine West: [167926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that Departmental staff deployed outside the UK have access to covid-19 vaccines.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ministry of Defence are working together to provide access to COVID-19 vaccines for overseas staff, and dependants for whom HMG has duty of care. This is in line with the UK national rollout programme.

■ Forced Marriage

Imran Ahmad Khan: [166604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many potential cases of forced marriage were investigated by the Forced Marriage Unit in 2020.

Nigel Adams:

Statistics on the number of cases dealt with by the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), including a breakdown by region and age, are published annually and are available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>. Statistics for 2020 will be added to this page as soon as data assurance processes are complete.

■ Guided Weapons

Tommy Sheppard: [167892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK was represented at the reported demarche meeting in Tel Aviv on 25 February 2020 on transfer of ballistic missiles.

James Cleverly:

The UK did not attend a demarche on 25 February 2020 in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

■ Mozambique: Overseas Aid and Security

Stephen Doughty: [167872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) security and (b) Official Development assistance the UK provided to Mozambique in each of the last three years.

James Duddridge:

(a) The Ministry of Defence, with other government departments, provides support to Mozambique under the UK-Mozambique Defence Memorandum of Understanding agreed in 2019. This includes defence cooperation and is intended to assist the

Government of Mozambique in addressing terrorism and promoting respect for human rights. The UK also co-leads, with Ireland, the International Community Crisis Response Taskforce, endorsed by the Government of Mozambique, which provides an important platform for high-level political dialogue and coordination relating to the security situation in Cabo Delgado.

(b) Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Mozambique supports activities in a number of sectors including humanitarian, health, education, water and sanitation, better governance and economic development. Data for the last three years which is available is below. This information is taken from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's National Statistics publication 'Statistics on International Development'. The next report, published in Autumn 2021, will provide a full breakdown of the UK's ODA spend for 2020.

£ THOUSANDS	2017	2018	2019
Total UK Bilateral ODA	57,526	70,895	103,583
Imputed UK share of Multilateral Net ODA	54,070	65,706	75,296
Total	111,596	136,600	178,880

Source: Statistics on International Development, 2019 - tinyurl.com/yh5vl9fz

■ Overseas Aid

Peter Kyle:

[\[167917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed reduction in UK aid to Yemen, Syria and other countries where there is ongoing conflict on trends in the number of (a) migrants and (b) asylum seekers from those countries to (i) the UK and (ii) other European countries.

James Cleverly:

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the UK economy has forced the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce how much the UK spends on Official Development Assistance (ODA). The FCDO is working through the implications of these changes for individual programmes. No final decisions have yet been made.

■ Overseas Aid: Females

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[165522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has for the UK as Chair in Office of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting to put the campaign for girls' education on the meeting agenda.

Wendy Morton:

Girls' education is one of the most transformational interventions for tackling poverty. Standing up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education is a major priority for this Government. As Chair in Office of the Commonwealth, the UK has worked to promote girls' education across the Commonwealth - for example, through the work of the Platform for Girls' Education and its policy papers, which include recommendations for action by policymakers and governments.

We are looking forward to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, which is being hosted by Rwanda this year. The UK will highlight the importance of girls' education, and encourage Commonwealth member states to continue committing to provide the opportunity for at least 12 years of quality education and learning for all girls and boys by 2030. We will also use our G7 Presidency this year to rally the international community in stepping up support for girls' education, and co-hosting the replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education with Kenya in July.

■ Radicalism: International Cooperation**Catherine West:**[\[165630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what engagement he has had with his international counterparts on the threat of far-right extremism.

James Cleverly:

Countering the rise of far-right extremism and far-right terrorism is a priority for the UK Government. We speak regularly to our international partners, both bilaterally and within multilateral forums, as part of our wider efforts to combat extremism.

■ Republic of Ireland: Foreign Relations**Catherine West:**[\[167928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what engagement he has had with the Irish Government following the end of the transition period.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary last spoke to Simon Coveney, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 15 February 2021. Amongst the topics discussed were the Northern Ireland Protocol; climate security; and foreign policy, including with respect to Ethiopia and Syria.

■ South Atlantic Ocean: Fisheries**Luke Pollard:**[\[166544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Chinese Government in respect of Chinese over-fishing of fish stocks in the South Atlantic.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government has not engaged bilaterally with the Chinese Government concerning over-fishing of fish stocks in the South Atlantic. Managing and maintaining fishing stocks in the South Atlantic is a shared responsibility. Given the importance of fishing to communities in the region and beyond, the Government continues to encourage relevant states to enhance their cooperation in this area. We are expanding and enhancing our efforts to manage fisheries sustainably, protect ecosystems and combat illegal fishing at an international scale through our engagement in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and other international organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN.

■ Special Envoy for Girls' Education**Layla Moran:**[\[166531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the new Special Envoy for Girls' Education does not have the same ministerial status and powers as her predecessor.

Wendy Morton:

Since her appointment by the Prime Minister as the Special Envoy for Girls' Education on 16 January, Helen Grant MP has already made huge progress in making the case for the UK's priority in educating girls with a range of key partners and stakeholders.

The Special Envoy is supported by FCDO officials, and works very closely with the FCDO Ministerial team, including the Foreign Secretary and myself as well as regular engagement with Number 10. This dedicated role contributes strongly, and brings significant influence to a joined-up, senior Government promotion of the agenda, particularly in this critical year of UK leadership through our G7 Presidency, and co-hosting of the GPE Replenishment.

■ Sub-Saharan Africa: Overseas Aid**Stephen Doughty:**[\[167871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the change in the level of total Official Development Assistance to eligible Commonwealth member states in Sub-Saharan Africa in the last reporting year.

Nigel Adams:

For the last reporting year available (2019), the UK's bilateral Official Development Assistance to Commonwealth countries in Sub-Saharan Africa was approximately £1.173 billion. This was an increase of around 7 per cent on the previous year.

Detail on UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in 2020 is not yet available. In the autumn, FCDO will publish "Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2020". This publication will contain detailed breakdowns including UK bilateral ODA to Commonwealth countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

■ Uighurs: Genocide**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[167348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of implications for Government policy of the findings of the report entitled *The Uyghur Genocide: An Examination of China's Breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention*, published on 8 March 2021 by the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy .

Nigel Adams:

The Government has noted the findings of the report. We will continue to engage with a wide range of experts and review all available evidence to inform our understanding of the situation in Xinjiang and to guide policy development. The Government remains deeply concerned by the human rights violations occurring in the region and continues to play a leading role in holding China to account, including at the UN.

■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict**Catherine West:**[\[167925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the Minsk Protocol as a basis for a long-term settlement to the conflict in Ukraine.

Wendy Morton:

During the Foreign Secretary's meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba in October last year, he reaffirmed the UK's commitment to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The UK has been clear on the importance of finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We fully support the Minsk agreements, which consist of the 5 September 2014 Minsk Protocol, the 19 September Minsk Memorandum, and the 12 February 2015 Minsk Package of Measures. We also support the work of Germany and France within the Normandy Format and the work of the OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group. The Russian Federation has taken unilateral steps which undermine Ukrainian sovereignty and run contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the Minsk agreements. We continue to call on Russia to play its part to end the conflict by immediately ceasing its support for the armed formations it backs, withdrawing its military personnel and weapons from the territory of Ukraine and fulfilling its obligations under the Minsk agreements.

The UK remains one of the largest contributors to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which monitors the security situation in Ukraine. We continue to call for the Special Monitoring Mission to have full, safe and unimpeded access throughout the whole of Ukraine, including non-government controlled areas, as is provided for by the Minsk agreements.

■ Ukraine: Corruption

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[167159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support anti-corruption activities in Ukraine.

Wendy Morton:

Corruption remains a major threat to Ukraine's stability and national security. It is vital that those in positions of authority show leadership and that Ukraine steps up its fight against corruption. Fundamental reforms are required - in particular to address anti-corruption - through reforms to the judicial system, further privatisation and the development of anti-monopoly legislation.

The UK is supporting a range of anti-corruption programmes in Ukraine, through the Good Governance and Conflict, Stability and Security Funds. The UK has also invested significantly in the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine and supported the establishment of the High Anti-Corruption Court. These are critical pieces of the anti-corruption machinery, which should make a significant contribution to investigating and punishing corruption. It is imperative that anti-corruption institutions are strengthened and allowed to work free from political interference. This is a message that we continue to give to Ukrainian interlocutors, bilaterally and through our chairing of the G7 Ambassadors' reform group in Kyiv.

■ United Nations: Sustainable Development

Stephen Doughty:

[\[167873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) promote cooperation between and (b) draw on the expertise of NHS and other clinical and academic expertise on global health issues in pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is a leader in global health and the NHS is a key part of our international offer, as one of the first Universal Health Coverage initiatives in the world. The UK draws on the full breadth of expertise in the UK health sector to help strengthen health systems in partner countries, to end preventable deaths and to respond to COVID-19.

In response to the pandemic, the UK has offered its world leading genomics expertise to countries around the world through a New Variant Assessment Platform, led by Public Health England, to identify new variants of the COVID-19 virus. In terms of broader global health security, the UK also works through the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC's) International Health Regulations Strengthening Project and the UK Public Health Rapid Support team, to support partner countries to better prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies. The UK's clinical and academic expertise is a key part of these efforts. DHSC's Commonwealth Partnership for Antimicrobial Stewardship programme has also created partnerships between

NHS volunteers and their counterparts in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, to work to address antimicrobial resistance.

We are also drawing on NHS expertise to strengthen health systems through the FCDO's Global Better Health Programme, working with the NHS and Healthcare UK on non-communicable diseases in South East Asia, Latin America and South Africa. In addition, the UK Partnerships for Health Systems programme funds health partnerships between UK NHS and health institutions and their counterparts in lower and middle income countries to improve health workforce and service performance.

■ Voluntary Service Overseas: Finance

Ben Lake:

[\[167935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his Department's future funding plans are for the Voluntary Service Overseas programme.

Wendy Morton:

The impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce our aid budget.

We are now working through the implications of these changes for individual programmes, including for the Volunteering for Development grant. No decisions have yet been made. We understand the need to communicate with VSO in a timely manner regarding this grant.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Antenatal Care

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[157977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the publication of the MBRRACE Perinatal Confidential Enquiry into stillbirths and neonatal deaths in twin pregnancies, what steps he is taking to ensure that pregnant women expecting multiples are looked after by a multidisciplinary team of doctors, midwives and sonographers who are experts in twin pregnancies.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Multidisciplinary fetal medicine clinics are being established across England, which aim to ensure that high risk women, including women expecting multiples, have timely access to specialist advice and care at all stages of pregnancy.

The Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle is contributing to reducing perinatal mortality with a specific focus on the management of fetal growth restriction and preterm birth prevention through collaborative working across maternity and neonatal teams. The Maternity and Neonatal Safety Improvement Programme includes a major focus on preterm optimisation through interventions that require multidisciplinary working and care planning to ensure seamless care delivery.

■ Breast Cancer: Health Services

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[157164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of pausing treatment as a result of the covid-19 pandemic on the outcomes of patients suffering from metastatic breast cancer.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has yet been made. The full extent of the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the outcomes of patients will not be known until the data is fully available.

■ Breast Cancer: Radiology

Peter Dowd:

[\[156432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent information his Department holds on the adequacy of staffing levels in breast radiology.

Peter Dowd:

[\[156433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent information his Department holds on the adequacy of staffing levels in the mammography workforce.

Jo Churchill:

While the Department does not hold information on the adequacy of staffing levels in the mammography and radiology workforce, we are aware of collaborative work undertaken by NHS England and Improvement, Public Health England and Health Education England to ensure that staffing levels are adequate.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe:

[\[155470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of care home (a) residents and (b) staff have been (i) offered and (ii) refused each vaccine dose in care homes in (A) Leicester East constituency, (B) Leicester and (C) the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information requested is not collected centrally.

Published data for England from 4 March shows that as at 28 February, 93.8% of eligible care home residents and 72.9% of eligible care home staff had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The proportion of care home residents and staff who have received their second dose is not yet available.

■ Care Homes: Visits

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[167205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of care homes that will be unable to allow visitors due to lack of insurance cover during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 March 2021]: We have made no such estimate.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Alex Norris:

[\[164611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when an assessment will have concluded on the effectiveness of the covid-19 vaccine for immunocompromised clinically extremely vulnerable people; and what steps he will take to ensure that those people are not expected to return to work after 31 March 2021 in the event that there is no data on efficacy by that date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 March 2021]: Exact efficacy data for those who are immunocompromised is currently emerging and many unknowns remain. The Government is exploring all avenues available to ensure immunocompromised clinically extremely vulnerable people can be successfully protected against COVID-19.

The Government is currently advising everyone considered clinically extremely vulnerable to shield until 31 March. Any decision to extend or end shielding measures will be decided upon by the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers and will be based on the latest scientific evidence. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks to all clinically extremely vulnerable people outlining the guidance that they should follow beyond 31 March.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[165454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will make an assessment of the potential benefits to the UK economy of exempting people who have received in full their covid-19 vaccinations from covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government will review whether COVID-19 status certification could play a role in reopening the economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety. This will include assessing to what extent certification would be effective in reducing risk and the potential uses to enable access to settings or a relaxation of COVID-19 secure mitigations.

■ **Coronavirus: Events Industry and Night Clubs**

Jon Trickett:

[\[166318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish (a) advice and (b) guidance provided by the (i) Chief Medical Officer and (ii) Public Health England on the reopening of nightclubs and staging of large scale events from 21 June as outlined in Step 4 of the roadmap of exiting lockdown restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England did not provide specific advice on the reopening of nightclubs and the staging of large events.

It is not possible to say what the restrictions on 21 June will be as they will be subject to a further review of the data.

■ Coronavirus: Ivermectin**Julian Sturdy:**[\[165519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Ivermectin as a prophylactic and treatment for covid-19; and what plans his Department has to use Ivermectin to treat covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Currently, ivermectin for oral use is not a licensed human medicine in the United Kingdom. For ivermectin to be granted a marketing authorisation in the UK, an application must be submitted to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for review. The MHRA has processes in place to expedite such an application, and assess this for quality, efficacy and safety.

The MHRA is aware that ivermectin, administered orally, is being studied for safety and efficacy in numerous clinical trials worldwide and is used in some countries in the treatment of COVID-19. While some studies have reported findings, other large studies are still on-going.

■ Coronavirus: Newcastle upon Tyne**Chi Onwurah:**[\[136515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which person or organisation is responsible for covid-19 vaccination in Newcastle and can respond to queries.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 18 January 2021]: The National Health Service has established Senior Responsible Officers for the COVID-19 vaccination programme to link local authorities and the social care system. The Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust is the lead provider for North Cumbria and the North East.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine**Fleur Anderson:**[\[167334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his department's guidance is for extremely clinically vulnerable people who are shielding and have children who have returned to school as the covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are advised to shield until 31 March, at which point new guidance will be issued.

Shielding advice is only for the clinically extremely vulnerable person and does not extend to other members of the household, such as children, who should continue to attend their school or college. In a household containing someone considered clinically extremely vulnerable, it is particularly important to follow Government guidance on social distancing. More guidance about living in a household with someone who is considered clinically extremely vulnerable is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/guidance-for-households-with-grandparents-parents-and-children-living-together-where-someone-is-at-increased-risk-or-has-symptoms-of-coronavirus-cov

■ Coronavirus: Research

Dr James Davies:

[146937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for the involvement of (a) medical research charities and (b) the NHS in researching long-covid.

Edward Argar:

The Department, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), recently launched a joint research call which closed on 9 December 2020. Through this call, £18.5 million has been committed to funding four research studies to understand and address the longer term physical and mental health effects of 'long' COVID-19, in individuals who contracted the virus but were not hospitalised.

The NIHR and UKRI have also invested £8.5 million in the PHOSP-COVID study which is one of the world's largest comprehensive research studies into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on hospitalised patients. Researchers and clinicians as part of the study are actively working with medical charities to help define key questions for research.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Henry Smith:

[128928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, where clinically extremely vulnerable people will be given a covid-19 vaccine; and what steps he is taking to ensure that those premises will be covid secure.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccinations are being delivered at a wide range of sites across the country to give people options about how and where to receive their vaccine. These sites include vaccination centres, hospital hubs and local vaccination centres.

All vaccination sites must administer the vaccine in line with the best Infection Prevention Control (IPC) procedures including social distancing, ventilation and wearing masks. Large-scale centres are required to have an environmental risk assessment in place which is expected to cover requirements for ventilation in a pandemic when transmission and virus shedding is a significant concern.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[130076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide local public health teams with flexibility to co-ordinate vaccine rollout with risk levels in local areas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's guidance issued on 2 December highlighted that implementation should also involve flexibility in vaccine deployment at a local level with due attention to mitigating health inequalities, such as might occur in relation to access to healthcare and ethnicity.

Mohammad Yasin:

[\[130181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the (a) equitable and (b) transparent distribution of the covid-19 vaccine throughout the East of England.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: To ensure equitable and transparent distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, the National Health Service have an allocations committee that reviews and monitors distribution. Allocations to all regions in England, including the East of England, are made on a population proportionate basis factoring in the priority cohorts identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Each Primary Care Network site, including those in the East of England, receives their own supply and work has been carried out with local clinical commissioning groups to ensure that vaccine supply aligns with the number of registered patients in the priority cohort groups.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[132866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance will be published for health care professionals on the safety and effectiveness of the covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England's Green Book advises health professionals and immunisation practitioners on the latest developments in the immunisation field. Chapter 14a sets out the guidance for COVID-19 vaccination.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[134437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how people living with HIV will access the covid-19 vaccine in their priority grouping if they have not disclosed their HIV status to their local GP but are known at their HIV clinic.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The new guidance means that people living with HIV in England can now choose to arrange their COVID-19 vaccine through specialist clinics, without notifying their general practitioner (GP).

We encourage everyone living with HIV to make their GP aware of their HIV diagnosis. Where that is not possible, HIV clinics should identify those who have not

given permission to disclose their HIV status to their GP and refer individuals into local vaccination hubs.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[134508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that housebound people in high priority groups can receive a covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Local vaccination services mobilise general practice, working together in groups of Primary Care Networks plus large and small community pharmacy sites. They coordinate and deliver vaccination to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site, including visiting care homes, the homes of housebound individuals and other settings.

Kate Osborne: [\[134609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of administering covid-19 vaccines 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 13 January 2021]: University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Nottingham's Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have been piloting a 24 hours a day, seven days a week vaccination service since 20 January. Data from the Birmingham site is awaited. NHS England will consider the findings from both pilots before deciding on next steps.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[136082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to provide fast-track covid-19 vaccination training to health care workers who are already qualified to carry out vaccinations.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Secondary legislation which enables more healthcare workers to administer flu and potential COVID-19 vaccines has been introduced. The National Health Service can expand the vaccination workforce by recruiting to clinical roles needed to support mass vaccinations in a safe way. We have recruited and mobilised an 80,000 strong vaccination workforce. Staff have been identified to meet supply in all three delivery models - community teams, vaccination sites and hospital hubs.

The national vaccination effort has also been boosted by many former clinicians, care staff, sectors and students and training for those already qualified was streamlined.

Rachael Maskell: [\[136564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who are (a) housebound and (b) unable to travel beyond their community are able to access covid-19 vaccinations.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Local vaccination services mobilise general practice, working together in groups of Primary Care Networks plus large and small community pharmacy sites. These services coordinate and deliver the vaccination to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site, including visiting care homes, the home of housebound individuals and other settings such as residential facilities for people with learning disabilities or autism. Those who are very frail and unable to leave their home, can wait for an invitation from their general practitioner or local vaccination services and either visit somewhere closer to home, or be vaccinated in their own home, should it be appropriate.

Jim Shannon:[\[137205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the rollout of the covid-19 vaccine is not delayed.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The National Health Service has now offered the COVID-19 vaccine to everyone in the top four priority cohorts by its 15 February target, a day ahead of schedule.

On 20 February we set new targets for the acceleration of the programme to offer all adults over 50 years old a first dose by mid-April and the rest of the adult population by the end of July. We are on track to meet those targets.

Olivia Blake:[\[137349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to identify and deliver the covid-19 vaccine to people who have been sleeping rough.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 18 January 2021]: Local vaccination services will play a vital role in reaching vulnerable groups such as those who are sleeping rough. These services mobilise general practice, working together in groups of Primary Care Networks plus large and small community pharmacy sites. These services provide the largest number of locations and are well placed to support the highest risk individuals, many of whom already have a trusted relationship with their local health services. They also coordinate and deliver vaccination to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site and to reach vulnerable groups such as those who are experiencing homelessness.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[138422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) directly employed prison staff, (b) non-directly employed people who work within prisons, (c) probation staff who have direct contact with service users and (d) prisoners over the age of 80 have received a first dose of a covid-19 vaccine as at 15 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information is not collected in the format requested.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:[\[139141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to vaccinate people who are homeless and rough sleeping.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 21 January 2021]: Local vaccination services play a vital role in reaching vulnerable groups such as those who are sleeping rough or homeless. These services mobilise general practice, working together in groups of Primary Care Networks plus large and small community pharmacy sites. These services provide the largest number of locations and are well placed to support the highest risk individuals, many of whom already have a trusted relationship with their local health services. They also coordinate and deliver vaccination to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site and to reach vulnerable groups such as those who are experiencing homelessness.

Scott Mann:[\[140206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has been directly informed of issues with covid-19 vaccine supply in rural areas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has not been directly informed of issues with COVID-19 vaccine supply in rural areas.

Dr Rupa Huq:[\[140212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that covid-19 vaccination centres are accessible for people with sight loss.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: Vaccination centres are subject to the same standards to support people with accessibility needs including visual impairment as all health care services. This includes ensuring good lighting and clear signage. In addition, marshals and staff will help people attending vaccination centres to navigate through the centre safely. The public may choose the most appropriate vaccination service to suit their needs. This may be best met by their general practitioner.

When sent an invitation for vaccine by letter, the public are directed to the location's individual details on accessibility. The letter also provides links to guidance and advice which can be enlarged on a screen, provided in accessible formats as well as provided in hard copy.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[140918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to implement the recommendation of the British Society of Immunology and introduce a robust programme of immune monitoring to assess how altering the dosing schedule affects the efficacy of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines with rapid modification of dosing schedules as appropriate.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: Public Health England (PHE) is employing existing surveillance systems and enhanced follow-up of cases to monitor how effective the vaccine is at protecting against a range of outcomes including infection, symptomatic disease, hospitalisations, mortality and onwards transmission. Data from PHE's SIREN study, published on 22 February, shows good evidence that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine helps to interrupt virus transmission and that one dose is effective against the virus from three to four weeks after the first dose. Data shows one dose reduces the risk of catching infection by more than 70%, rising to 85% after the second dose.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[141585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) monitor patients who have had the first dose of a covid-19 vaccine, (b) monitor which patients have had which vaccine and (c) ensure the follow-up dose is administered to each patient on schedule.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 26 January 2021]: The National Immunisation Management System (NIMS) is the national register of COVID-19 vaccinations. At the point that someone receives their COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccinating team will record this information on the NIMS system and onto a patient's general practitioner record. When patients are vaccinated, they should receive a vaccine record card where the date of their vaccination, the suggested date for their second dose and details of the vaccine type and batch can be recorded.

The National Booking Service is primarily sending physical invite letters to people's registered addresses. These letters give the option of booking online, or by the free 119 phone line. Others can make an appointment on behalf of individuals who are not able to make it themselves. Follow up phone calls and letters are made to those who have been sent an initial letter but not responded.

Sir Charles Walker:[\[141940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) elderly people and (b) people with underlying health conditions who are housebound receive the covid-19 vaccine in a timely manner within their home; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 27 January 2021]: Local vaccination services play a vital role in reaching those who may be elderly or housebound. These services mobilise general practice, working together in groups of Primary Care Networks plus large and small community pharmacy sites. These services provide the largest number of locations and are well placed to support our highest risk individuals, many of whom already have a trusted relationship with their local health services. They also coordinate and deliver vaccination to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site, including

visiting care homes, the homes of housebound individuals and other settings such as residential facilities for people with learning disabilities or autism.

Mr William Wragg:

[142977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will issue guidance to hospital trusts on vaccinating vulnerable inpatients against covid-19 on admission rather than discharge.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 January 2021]: There are no current plans to issue guidance to hospital trusts on vaccinating vulnerable inpatients against COVID-19 on admission rather than discharge.

Timing of vaccinations for vulnerable inpatients, if they have not already been vaccinated as one of the priority cohorts, would be a decision for clinicians responsible for their care taking into account their risk of contracting COVID-19 relative to the potential impact of the vaccine on their treatment.

Fleur Anderson:

[148935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that covid-19 vaccination centres are accessible to disabled people.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccination centres are subject to the same standards to support people with accessibility needs including visual impairment as all health care services. This includes ensuring good lighting and clear signage. In addition, marshals and staff help people attending vaccination centres to navigate safely. When sent an invitation for vaccine by letter, the public are directed to the location's individual details on accessibility.

Local vaccination services also coordinate and deliver vaccinations to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site, including by visiting care homes, the homes of housebound individuals, residential facilities for people with learning disabilities or autism, prisons and reaching vulnerable groups such as those who are experiencing homelessness.

Justin Madders:

[151749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been (a) offered and (b) given vaccinations in each Middle Layer Super Output Area in England by JCVI priority group.

Nadhim Zahawi:

NHS England and NHS Improvement publish weekly data for vaccinations in England. This provides a more detailed breakdown, including data on vaccinations by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) of residence and age group. This is available at the following link:

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

We do not currently publish data at MSOA level by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's priority groups or data for vaccinations offered.

Sarah Owen:

[158223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of prioritising frontline police officers for receipt of the covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

For phase two of the COVID 19 vaccination programme, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation published its interim advice on 26 February setting out that the most effective way to minimise hospitalisations and deaths is to continue to prioritise people by age, and not occupation. This is because age is assessed to be the strongest factor linked to mortality, morbidity and hospitalisations. Therefore, police officers will not be prioritised based on their occupation.

Henry Smith:

[160625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of covid-19 vaccination uptake among clinically extremely vulnerable people, by disease or condition.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have made no such estimate as data is not collected in that format.

Weekly updates are published on the number of first and second dose vaccinations in England to clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) patients covering cumulative totals, numbers identified as CEV and the percentage of CEV people who have received at least one dose. The data is available at the following link:

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

Nadia Whittome:

[160897]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether autism is considered a learning disability for the purposes of the covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Although autism is not technically considered a learning disability, many autistic people also have a learning disability. On 24 February, the Joint Commission on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published a clarification of their advice on vaccinating people with a learning disability. The JCVI confirmed that while their clinical view remains that those at greatest risk are people with severe and profound learning disabilities, they support the practical operational approach of inviting everyone on the General Practice Learning Disability Register to be vaccinated as part of cohort six in phase one.

Darren Jones:

[165641]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of when people with asthma should be prioritised to receive a covid-19 vaccination; and whether he has directed the Joint Committee on Vaccination and

Immunisation to make an assessment of when people with asthma should be prioritised for that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is the independent body of scientific and clinical experts who advise the Government on which vaccines the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. The JCVI has concluded that only a subset of those with asthma are at clinically high risk from COVID-19. This group are defined as adults with asthma who require continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission and will be vaccinated as part of priority group six.

An individual with a more severe case of asthma may have been included in the clinically extremely vulnerable group, in which case they will be vaccinated as part of priority group four. Those in priority group four should already have been offered the vaccine.

Stuart Anderson:

[\[165673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve public confidence in the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department, the National Health Service and Public Health England, are providing advice and information at every possible opportunity to support those getting the vaccine and those who have questions about the vaccination process. Our communications include targeted information and advice via TV, radio and social media. This has been translated into 13 languages. Print and online material has also been made available, including interviews, and practical advice has appeared in hundreds of national, regional, local and specialist titles.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS are holding regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders and black, Asian and minority ethnic organisations to provide advice and information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they will be made available. New campaigns will help tackle vaccine misinformation online through a series of shareable videos.

Richard Fuller:

[\[166368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to prioritise the parents of children who are clinically extremely vulnerable for receipt of the covid-19 vaccine in the event that those parents do not meet the eligibility criteria for receipt of that vaccine under the terms of any other priority cohort for the delivery of that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are no current plans to offer the vaccine to the parents of clinical extremely vulnerable (CEV) children.

In line with current advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), adult members of a household that includes someone who is CEV are prioritised for vaccination according to their own age and clinical risk. They are not prioritised on the basis of sharing a household with someone who is CEV whether this person is an adult or a child. Children under 16 years of age, even if they are CEV, are at low risk of serious morbidity and mortality and given the absence of safety and efficacy data on the vaccine, are not recommended for vaccination.

The JCVI continues to look at the emerging evidence on COVID-19 and will offer further advice if and when evidence is found that vaccinating a particular group, including household members of individuals most at risk from COVID-19, would further reduce overall mortality, morbidity and hospitalisation which is the overarching objective.

■ **Cutaneous T-cell Lymphoma: Health Services**

Henry Smith:

[\[158006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK Rare Disease Framework, what steps he plans to take to engage with the rare blood cancer community to improve care coordination for people living with mycosis fungoides and Sézary syndrome, two subtypes of Cutaneous T-Cell Lymphoma, a rare blood cancer.

Jo Churchill:

We will continue to engage with a range of stakeholders, including the rare blood cancer community, before publishing action plans that outline how the priorities and underlying themes in the Framework will be addressed.

■ **Dementia: Bolton**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[159268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support people with dementia in Bolton who are living in (a) the community and (b) care homes.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 3 March 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group individually assesses the needs of service users with dementia and that they are supported to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. During the pandemic we have enhanced that support by providing evidence based guidance on how best to manage or mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on people living with dementia in care homes and in the community. We have also funded the Alzheimer's Society and the Race Equality Foundation to provide practical and tailored advice and support.

■ Epilepsy: Pregnancy

Cat Smith: [\[158109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is holding discussions with relevant stakeholders on making the Medicines in Pregnancy Valproate Registry mandatory for all pregnant women who take anti-epilepsy medication.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is exploring how mandation of inclusion in the valproate registry can be implemented and will hold discussions with relevant stakeholders.

■ Gender Recognition

Jim Shannon: [\[168924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have transitioned in each of the last three years.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not available in the format requested. Transitioning is individual to each patient and no end point is defined.

■ General Practitioners: Registration

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[166603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people not registered with a GP in (a) West Yorkshire and (b) England.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Females

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[167358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the speed of diagnosis and treatment of conditions which affect female reproductive health.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government has embarked on the Women's Health Strategy for England. To ensure the strategy reflects what women identify as priorities, we launched a call for evidence on International Women's Day which will run for twelve weeks.

The call for evidence seeks to examine women's experiences of the whole health and care system, including female-specific issues like gynaecological conditions, pregnancy and post-natal support. Research, evidence and data improvements in women's health is a key theme in the call for evidence to aid the diagnosis and treatment of female-specific conditions. The Government has also committed to

developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health strategy and HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish in 2021.

■ **Health Services: Employment**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[164423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the sixteen criteria each position of employment in the central health service is judged upon.

Helen Whately:

We have interpreted the hon. Member's question to refer to pay and employment criteria in the Hospital and Community Health services sector of the National Health Service, for non-medical staff employed on the national collectively agreed Agenda for Change contract.

The Agenda for Change pay bands are underpinned by a Job Evaluation Scheme (JES), developed through collaboration between NHS leaders, trade unions and independent job evaluation experts. The JES is a structured method of comparing job demands and seeks to ensure staff receive equal pay for work of equal value.

The sixteen criteria underpinning the JES are as follows:

- communications and relationship skills;
- knowledge, training and experience;
- analytical and judgemental skills;
- planning and organisational skills;
- physical skills;
- responsibilities for patient/client care;
- responsibilities for human resources;
- responsibilities for information resources;
- responsibilities for research and development;
- freedom to act;
- physical effort;
- mental effort;
- emotional effort; and
- working conditions.

■ **HIV Infection: Health Services**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[167932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the stigma experienced by the trans and non-binary communities in accessing HIV (a) prevention, (b) testing and (c) care.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[167934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle potential health inequalities experienced by trans people after they have been diagnosed HIV positive.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to achieving zero new HIV transmissions in England by 2030, as well as tackling stigma and health inequalities that exist around HIV.

Issues related to health inequalities and stigma experienced by trans and non-binary communities will be considered as we develop our Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish in 2021.

■ **HIV Infection: Research**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[167933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the (a) quality and (b) quantity of HIV research on trans men.

Jo Churchill:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the largest public funder of health research in the United Kingdom. The NIHR funds a wide range of research on HIV. Transgender men are named as potential study participants and beneficiaries of the results of the research of several NIHR funded research projects across programmes including the Public Health Research Programme and Research for Patient Benefit Programme, with a combined value of just under £8.5 million. The NIHR continues to welcome funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including on HIV in transgender men.

■ **Hospitals: Closures**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[166602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost of closing down the NHS Nightingale Hospitals.

Edward Argar:

The decommissioning of Nightingale hospital sites is still under way and these costs are not yet available.

■ **Hospitals: Medical Equipment**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[166600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reallocate the equipment in NHS Nightingale Hospitals when those hospitals are closed.

Edward Argar:

Equipment in Nightingale hospitals will be redistributed within the National Health Service to ensure it is used to support patient care. Some equipment will also be put into storage to support future demand.

Hospitals: Yorkshire and the Humber**Imran Ahmad Khan:****[166601]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost of closing down the NHS Nightingale Yorkshire and Humber Hospital.

Edward Argar:

The decommissioning of Nightingale hospital sites is still under way and these costs are not yet available.

Learning Disability: Coronavirus**Justin Madders:****[158101]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the risk of covid-19 among people with a learning difficulty which is not severe and profound.

Helen Whately:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has made an assessment of the risks facing people with a learning disability, including those with a learning disability which is not severe or profound. This is set out in their letter of 23 February 2021 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-the-health-and-social-care-secretary-on-covid-19-vaccination-in-people-with-learning-disabilities/letter-from-the-icvi-to-the-health-and-social-care-secretary-23-february-2021>

Liver Diseases: Health Services**Tracey Crouch:****[166384]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the total annual cost to the public purse of treating (a) liver disease, (b) alcohol-related liver disease and (c) non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested as it is not possible to disaggregate expenditure to show solely liver disease.

Mental Health Services**Alexander Stafford:****[166615]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people sought help for mental health issues in 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not available in the format requested. The requested data cannot be provided. People can access support for their mental health from a range of health services, including through their general practitioner, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services and in accident and emergency departments. Children and young people have additional referral routes, including through mental health support teams in schools and colleges. The reasons for presenting to health services are not routinely recorded across all services.

Alexander Stafford:[\[166618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what different forms of mental health support are available to patients.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

A wide range of support is available for people with mental health problems on the National Health Service. These range from school and college-based mental health support teams, evidence-based therapeutic interventions such as prescribed medication, psychological and talking therapies provided by Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services for more common conditions, through to specialist mental health support services and 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines for those with more serious conditions.

Social prescribing and green social prescribing can link people with mental health problems to non-clinical interventions and activities, such as local walking for health schemes, community gardening and food-growing projects. Digital resources such as the Every Mind Matters portal and the GOV.UK and NHS websites also offer expert advice and practical tips to support mental health and wellbeing.

Alexander Stafford:[\[166622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people unable to access mental health services as a result of the waiting times for those services.

Alexander Stafford:[\[166624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) deaths and (b) injuries as a result of people not accessing mental health support in each of the last three years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no such estimates. Any person in need of mental health support should receive that support as soon as possible and clinical commissioning groups and mental health providers should ensure that people have access to timely support.

■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists**Alexander Stafford:**[\[166616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for people requiring on-going mental health support.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not held in the format requested. There is currently no single waiting times standard that covers all mental health services.

Alexander Stafford:[\[166617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are on the waiting list for mental health support in (a) England and (b) Rother Valley constituency.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not available as there is currently no single waiting times standard that covers all mental health services.

■ Mental Health: Care Homes**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[156549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the mental health of care home residents suffering from Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases of the restrictions on care home visits during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Our guidance says that those residents with the highest care needs can now nominate an 'essential care giver'. These visitors will be able to visit in order to provide essential care. They will have the same testing and personal protective equipment arrangements as care home staff so that they can also provide extra support, like help with washing and dressing or eating well.

We have commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research to address the immediate priorities of people living with dementia and their carers.

■ Mental Health: Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[153271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has received from mental health charities on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) people with mental health issues and (b) the provision of and access to mental health services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: We have received a range of representations from mental health charities on various issues related to the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and access to services. We continue to engage with stakeholders on a regular basis.

■ Mental Illness**Alexander Stafford:**[\[166614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people affected by mental health issues.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are working with the National Health Service, Public Health England and others to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19 and plan for how to support the public's mental health and wellbeing.

■ NHS Test and Trace**Cat Smith:**[\[140164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) consultants and (b) suppliers are employed by NHS Test and Trace; and what the total expenditure on those contractors is to date.

Helen Whately:

Approximately 2,500 consultants and suppliers have been employed by NHS Test and Trace. £438 million is budgeted to Professional Services which includes management consultants and suppliers.

■ NHS Test and Trace: Finance**Rachel Reeves:**[\[166398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 3.8 of the Budget 2021, how much of the £15 billion announced for NHS Test and Trace will be outsourced to private companies.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 March 2021]: Spending plans for the £15 billion for 2021-22 is currently undergoing detailed financial planning exercise and will be finalised in due course.

■ NHS: Dental Services**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[165490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase provision of NHS dental practices.

Dr Dan Poulter:[\[165491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to address the backlog of appointments with NHS dentists once covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

National Health Service dental practices have been able to open for face to face NHS dental care, including routine care, from 8 June. NHS England and NHS Improvement have set out guidance that dentists should focus on care that is urgent, care to vulnerable groups and then overdue routine appointments.

A steady increase in dental activity has been made possible following updated Infection Prevention and Control guidance issued by Public Health England. Contractual arrangements for quarter four have been introduced by NHS England

and NHS Improvement requiring dental practices to deliver 45% of contracted units of dental activity from 1 January to 31 March 2021 to be deemed to have delivered the full contractual volume. This is expected to increase available NHS dental care for all patients.

The Department is working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Office of the Chief Dental Officer on contractual arrangements for 2021/22 onwards and work is ongoing to increase levels of service, as fast as is safely possible.

■ **NHS: Staff**

Jon Trickett: [\[166319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of NHS staff living in each parliamentary constituency, broken down by geographic region.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

■ **Prisons: Coronavirus**

Fleur Anderson: [\[145161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prison staff (a) in total and (b) based in London have received a covid-19 vaccine.

Fleur Anderson: [\[145162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the deadline date for all prison officers to have received a covid-19 vaccine.

Fleur Anderson: [\[145164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the deadline date for all London prison officers to have received a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 2 February 2021]: We do not hold data on the number of vaccinations administered to occupational groups other than health and social care workers, therefore no such assessment has been made.

■ **Strokes: Rehabilitation**

Munira Wilson: [\[167326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that stroke teams follow up with stroke survivors during the covid-19 outbreak to support rehabilitation needs.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have funded the Stroke Association to provide Stroke Connect, which was developed in direct response to COVID-19 to ensure stroke survivors and their carers had support when discharged from hospital. The

Department has also funded the Stroke Association to continue to provide frontline support to stroke survivors and others connected to stroke.

The National Stroke Programme is ensuring stroke rehabilitation services can meet survivors' needs as described in the NHS Long Term Plan. This includes a dedicated programme piloting higher intensity models of stroke rehabilitation delivery as well as guiding principles of a best practice integrated community stroke service model for clinical services.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[150904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether military personnel will be used as part of the quarantine program for people arriving from a country on the UK's travel ban list.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 February 2021]: We have no plans to use military personnel for managed quarantine facilities.

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments: Licensing

Alex Sobel:

[\[167946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many project licences granted under The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 were amended as a result of developments in the 3Rs between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

For project licences granted under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, data are not collected on amendments that specifically relate to developments in the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement).

Standard conditions in establishment licences require that each establishment must have systems in place to ensure activities at the establishment follow the principles of the 3Rs.

Project holders are required to ensure that the regulated procedures applied as part of the programme of work specified in their licence are those which, to the greatest extent, use the minimum number of animals and only involve animals with the lowest capacity to experience pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Project licences do not always need to be amended before a licence holder can implement 3Rs developments.

■ British Nationality Act 1948

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[165453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the British Nationalities Act 1948 to enable citizenship to be passed down from the mother as well as the father.

Kevin Foster:

Women have been able to pass on British nationality in the same way as men since 1983.

The British Nationality Act 1981 now also provides for the registration of those who would have become British citizens had women been able to pass on their citizenship in the same way as men before 1983.

We are also looking at legislative options to introduce a similar registration provision in relation to British Overseas Territory citizenship.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Neil Coyle:

[\[167882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure that people responsible for the production or distribution of misleading material about the covid-19 vaccine are prosecuted.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has made it very clear that false information, disinformation and manipulated information deceives and misleads people. When misleading material is distributed in respect of Covid-19 vaccines lives are put at risk.

There are general provisions in [s.44 and s.45 Serious Crime Act 2007](#) which make it a criminal offence to encourage someone to commit a criminal offence. So where disinformation is created and shared with intent to encourage others to participate in criminal acts, we believe there are powers to pursue a prosecution under existing law. However, the Government is also developing a comprehensive policy response to tackle the distribution of misleading material, working closely with civil society, academia and tech platforms.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Fees and Charges

Alexander Stafford:

[\[166625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on police budgets of fees payable to HM Courts & Tribunals Service for civil applications.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office and Ministry of Justice work together closely to ensure that fees paid by public authorities are set at appropriate levels. It is only right that the

government seeks to recover a contribution towards the costs of providing HMCTS services from court and tribunal users – including public authorities – where they can afford to do so. Such contributions are used to fund a more effective and efficient court service and support access to justice.

On the 4th February 2021, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £636 million compared to 2020/21.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Claire Hanna: [\[167971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance has been issued by her Department to (a) prison and (b) probation services throughout the UK to help people in custody either on remand or serving a sentence to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme.

Claire Hanna: [\[167972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will issue guidance that will allow for imprisonment as a reasonable ground for a late EU Settlement Scheme application.

Kevin Foster:

The EU Settlement Scheme guidance published on GOV.UK applies to all those who may apply under the scheme, including prisoners.

HM Prison and Probation Service has been working closely with the Home Office to ensure those who are eligible to apply under the scheme are aware of it and are able to do so.

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the Government has made clear, where a person eligible for status under the EU Settlement Scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications by those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

We will publish clear, non-exhaustive guidance in the near future on what constitutes reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. For now, the focus remains on communicating information about the scheme and helping people to apply before the deadline.

■ Invalid Vehicles

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[166598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many recorded instances of enforcement action against users of mobility vehicles for breaking rules of their use there were in 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

The Home Office collect and publish data on use of various police powers, including Fixed Penalty Notices for motoring offences. Data as of March 2020 are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2020>

However, data specifically on enforcement actions against users of mobility vehicles are not available.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Robert Largan: [\[165702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 5 October 2020, reference RL9115.

Kevin Foster:

The UKVI MP Account Management team responded on 10 March 2021.

■ **Police: Per Capita Costs**

Sir Edward Leigh: [\[166315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the disparity in per capita funding of police forces between urban and rural areas.

Kit Malthouse:

On the 4th February 2021, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £636 million compared to 2020/21. This continued investment shows the Government is committed to supporting the entire policing sector.

The police funding formula remains the most reliable mechanism we have to distribute core grant funding although this Government is alive to the concerns many in the policing sector hold over the current formula and we acknowledge that the current arrangements are out of date. Careful consideration will be given during the upcoming Spending Review and as part of our longer-term vision for policing.

■ **Protest**

Jamie Stone: [\[167931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure the right to peaceful protest during the covid-19 lockdown.

Kit Malthouse:

The right to protest is the cornerstone of our democracy and the Government is absolutely committed to maintaining freedom of expression.

However, we are currently in a national lockdown as we continue to fight this deadly pandemic. We have a duty to reduce transmission and prevent more lives being lost which is why currently, outdoor gatherings of more than two are not permitted unless an exemption applies.

Government will keep the rules under review and amend as necessary to ensure they remain relevant and proportionate in line with easing the lockdown restrictions, and as we enter the next stages of the Roadmap.

■ Security Guards: First Aid

Emma Hardy:

[\[165660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on wheelchair users of the requirement from 1 April 2021 that applicants for a door supervisor or security guard licence will be expected to successfully complete a first aid qualification before taking their licence-linked training.

Victoria Atkins:

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) regulates the private security industry in the United Kingdom. As part of its broader reforms relating to qualifications for SIA licences in order to improve public safety and to raise standards in the private security industry, it has introduced the requirement for first aid training.

Policy development in this area included an Equalities Impact Assessment. The policy included consideration of how wheelchair users and others may fulfil the First Aid requirement. The SIA have produced advice on reasonable adjustments for this requirement. This allows learners to take a 'knowledge only' course where they can present evidence that they are unable to undertake practical First Aid. The equality impact of these reforms will be kept under review as they are implemented.

■ Sexual Offences

Sarah Champion:

[\[167874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to clauses 148-150 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, what constitutes a positive requirement; and what assessment she has made of the effect of the positive requirements for registered sex offenders imposed would make to the police's ability to manage sex offenders.

Victoria Atkins:

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill includes measures to reform and strengthen the regime for managing sex offenders and those who pose a risk.

Once enacted, the Bill will enable Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPO) and Sexual Risk Orders (SRO) to include provisions imposing positive obligations on offenders where appropriate. This could include, for example, requiring an individual to engage in a behaviour change programme or be subject to regular polygraph testing.

The Home Office has published an impact assessment alongside the introduction of the Bill which is available via the following link:

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0268/20210304%20HO0383%20-%20PCSC%20Overarching%20IA%20-%20FINAL%20CLEAN%20\(signed\).pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0268/20210304%20HO0383%20-%20PCSC%20Overarching%20IA%20-%20FINAL%20CLEAN%20(signed).pdf)

■ **South Yorkshire Police: Legal Costs**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[166626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much South Yorkshire Police paid in court fees for civil applications in financial year 2019-20.

Kit Malthouse:

According to HMCTS payment systems, in financial year 2019-20 South Yorkshire Police paid court fees in the region of £195,000. It is only right that the government seeks to recover a contribution towards the costs of providing HMCTS services from court and tribunal users – including public authorities – where they can afford to do so. The fees paid cover a range of proceedings and such contributions are used to fund a more effective and efficient court service and support access to justice.

South Yorkshire Police will receive a total settlement of up to £297.8 million in 2021/22 which is an increase of up to £15.7 million from 2020/21.

■ **Youth Mobility Scheme: EU Countries**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[167834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department is making on agreeing a youth mobility scheme with the EU.

Kevin Foster:

We remain open to expanding our Youth Mobility Scheme to more nations, based on agreeing suitable reciprocal arrangements.

We have not commenced formal discussions with any EU member states or with the EU collectively but remain open to doing so.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Bloor Homes: Planning Permission**

Steve Reed:

[\[165563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason he decided to determine the appeal proposed Sandleford Park planning application by Bloor Homes rather than the planning inspector; and if he will publish the advice of the planning inspector on that application.

Christopher Pincher:

This appeal was recovered for Ministerial decision by officials under delegated powers, with no Ministerial involvement. Decisions on recovering appeals are made in accordance with the Written Ministerial Statement of June 2008. This appeal was recovered as being residential development of over 150 units or on sites of over five

hectares, which would significantly impact on the Government's objective to secure a better balance between housing demand and supply and create high quality, sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. A public inquiry into the scheme will be held in May, overseen by an independent planning Inspector, who will prepare a report and recommendation for Ministers. That will be published alongside the final decision.

Steve Reed:

[\[166440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of potential conflicts of interest regarding the ministerial determination of the planning application for Sandleford Park, in the context of the owner of Bloor Homes being a Conservative Party donor.

Christopher Pincher:

All planning casework decisions are made in line with published propriety guidance. This decision will be taken on the basis of evidence heard at a public inquiry overseen by an independent planning Inspector, and the reasons for it will be set out in a published decision letter.

■ **Building Safety Fund**

Neil Coyle:

[\[166574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the timeframe for the submission of applications to the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government extended the full tender deadline for Building Safety Fund to 30 June 2021. This deadline has been set based on what we now know about registrants and their readiness to be able to deliver projects. The announcement on 10 February of an additional £3.5 billion of funding provides assurance for residents that all eligible applications to the Building Safety Fund will be able to proceed.

■ **Burlington House: Rents**

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[166313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the long-term (a) scientific and (b) academic effect of seeking to charge a commercial rent to non-commercial occupants of properties owned by his Department, with specific reference to the learned societies at Burlington House.

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[166314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with representatives of the (a) Society of Antiquaries, (b) Royal Astronomical Society, (c) Geological Society, (d) Linnean Society and (e) Ministers and

officials in other Government departments on the future of the aforementioned learned societies at Burlington House.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[167268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that learned societies at Burlington House remain in their current location and are not priced out by rental charges.

Eddie Hughes:

[Holding answer 16 March 2021]: Five Learned Societies are tenants of New Burlington House, owned by the Department. Following a High Court settlement, all parties agreed in 2005 that rent would increase to market levels over a period of 80 years. The Department clarified that the referenced rent is limited to reflect cultural and educational purposes, rather than commercial office rent. A market rental valuation was agreed between the Department and the Learned Societies; mostly recently in 2019. The Learned Societies currently pay around 30% of this agreed market rent and will not pay full market rent until 2085.

The Department is sympathetic to the Societies' position and is exploring whether there is a solution that can deliver value for taxpayers and help the Learned Societies to remain at New Burlington House, and an assessment of value will be made as part of an agreement. The Department has been discussing options with the Learned Societies and DCMS given their responsibility for policy in regards to culture, museums and heritage.

■ Community Development: Finance

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[166304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the methodology used for the allocation of funding to local authorities under the Community Champions scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

On 25 January we confirmed £23.75 million funding - allocated to 60 councils and further voluntary groups across England - to expand work to support those most at risk from COVID-19 and to boost vaccine take up through the Community Champions scheme. This is part of over £7.9 billion government funding provided to councils to help them support their communities during the pandemic. The scheme is specifically targeted at areas where challenges may be greatest due to the local combination of disproportionately impacted groups.

The list of local authorities who were invited to take part in the scheme drew upon a wide range of data sources, including DHSC/PHE long-term data on COVID-19 incidence; data on social integration; and evidence on the prevalence and specific support needs of disabled people in an area.

■ Council Tax

Duncan Baker:

[\[165679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of council tax in the (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2010-11 financial years by local authority area.

Eddie Hughes:

Based on the latest OBR forecasts, the average council tax bill in England in 2021/22 would be 1.7% lower in real terms (RPI) than in 2010/11.

■ Homelessness: Coronavirus

Neil Coyle:

[\[167881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to work with (a) the Department of Health and Social Care and (b) public health teams to ensure homeless people receive the covid-19 vaccine.

Eddie Hughes:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England, and NHS England to ensure the health and care needs of vulnerable people experiencing rough sleeping can be met during the COVID-19 pandemic – including access to the vaccination.

On 8 January, we asked all local authorities to ensure that even more people experiencing rough sleeping are safely accommodated, backed by £10 million. We also asked that this opportunity is actively used to make sure that individuals are registered with a GP and are factored into local area vaccination plans, in line with JCVI prioritisation.

Many people sleeping rough may have underlying conditions that increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 but may struggle to access the healthcare they need. The JCVI have now advised that local teams should consider a universal offer of the COVID-19 vaccine for people experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping alongside the delivery of the programme to priority group 6, where appropriate. This will help ensure that the wider health needs of people who sleep rough are addressed, supporting them now and for the future.

We recognise that this group may also experience additional barriers to accessing mainstream delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine. That's why we have encouraged local authorities to work with their local health partners to consider alternative means of delivering the vaccine where mainstream provision is unsuitable.

We continue to work with the homelessness sector, local authorities and health and care partners, to ensure the needs of those experiencing homelessness can be met.

■ Homelessness: Temporary Accommodation

Neil Coyle:

[\[167879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to work with homeless accommodation providers to ensure covid-secure provision.

Eddie Hughes:

We have taken unprecedented steps to provide rough sleepers with the COVID-secure accommodation they need during the pandemic. This work has not stopped, and by the end of January we had supported over 37,000 people, with over 11,000 in emergency accommodation and over 26,000 already moved into longer-term accommodation.

We are continuing to ask local councils to help more rough sleepers into COVID-secure accommodation and to ensure that their wider health needs are addressed, and have provided £10 million to enable them to do so. This builds on the package of winter support announced last year, which included a £10 million Cold Weather Fund for all local authorities to bring forward COVID-secure accommodation and £2 million funding for the faith, communities and voluntary sector to transform their traditional communal sleeping services into self-contained and COVID-secure accommodation.

We have also worked extensively with Public Health England to provide Operating Principles to help the sector open shelters as safely as possible where absolutely necessary, when self-contained accommodation cannot be made available and when local partners agree that it is the right thing to do.

On 25 February, the Secretary of State announced further voluntary sector funding that will enable local night shelters to provide COVID-secure, sustainable models of provision moving forwards.

■ Housing: Disability

Jim Shannon:

[\[166427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with homebuilders on providing accessible and adaptable housing.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government launched a consultation on raising accessible housing standards on 8 September. My Department wrote to a wide range of housebuilders, inviting them to respond with their views and evidence and my officials presented details of that consultation at the Home Builders Federation annual conference on 16 September.

Jim Shannon:

[\[166428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of homes needed to be built or adapted to meet the accessibility and adaptability standard equivalent to Category 2 of Part M of the Building Regulations.

Christopher Pincher:

There is no centralised estimate of the need and number of M4(2) accessible and adaptable new homes, and this is because the framework depends on local plan makers following a common methodology putting evidence of local need and viability into the heart of their forecasts. There is a guide to available disability data and guidance for councils in how to assess their housing needs.

Housing: Solar Power**Chris Grayling:**[\[165449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to implement the Government's policy of requiring solar panels on the roof of every new house.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government remains committed to meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050 and recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of buildings has to make in meeting it. We must ensure that the energy efficiency standards we set through the Building Regulations for new homes put us on track to meet the 2050 target. From 2021, new homes will be expected to produce 31% less CO2 emissions compared to current standards, and from 2025, the Future Homes Standard (FHS) will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% lower CO2 emissions compared to those built to current standards. Homes built under the FHS will be 'zero carbon ready', which means that in the longer term, no further retrofit work for energy efficiency will be necessary to enable them to become zero-carbon homes as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

The Building Regulations set minimum energy performance standards for new homes and non-domestic buildings. They are couched in performance terms and do not prescribe the technologies, materials or fuels to be used, allowing builders and homeowners the flexibility to innovate and select the most practical and cost-effective solutions appropriate in any development. For example, many roofs are not suitable for solar photovoltaic (PV) panels because of the visual amenity, strength, or direction of the building.

Leasehold: Service Charges**Richard Fuller:**[\[167178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to give freeholders on private and mixed tenure estates equivalent rights to leaseholders to (a) challenge the reasonableness of estate rent charges and (b) have the right to apply to the First-tier Tribunal to appoint a new manager for the provision of services covered by estate rent charges; and what assessment he has made of the financial effect on freeholders of not having those same rights as leaseholders.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. Where people pay estate rentcharges it is not appropriate that these homeowners have limited rights to challenge these costs.

That is why the Government intends to legislate to give freeholders on private and mixed tenure estates equivalent rights to leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate rentcharges as well as a right to apply to the First-tier Tribunal to appoint a new manager to manage the provision of services covered by estate rentcharges.

We will translate these measures into law as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Levelling Up Fund**Steve Reed:****[166441]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to support areas of high deprivation not listed as priority areas for capacity funding under the Levelling Up Fund to bid for Levelling Up Funding.

Eddie Hughes:

We recognise that levelling up requires a multi-faceted approach and the Levelling Up Fund is part of a broad package of complementary UK-wide interventions. The Levelling Up Fund will be allocated competitively and is open to all local areas.

As set out in the prospectus published at Budget, the index used for the Levelling Up Fund places areas into category one, two or three based on the local area's need for economic recovery and growth, improved transport connectivity, and regeneration.

We have published the index and further details of the methodology used to calculate the index of places set out in the prospectus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-additional-documents> .

Steve Reed:**[167877]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish data underpinning the selection of areas for capacity funding under the Levelling Up Fund for each priority tier against each metric listed in the Levelling Up Methodology Note.

Steve Reed:**[167878]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the data used to assess (a) need for improved transport connectivity (in England only), (b) need for regeneration and (c) need for economic recovery and growth to select areas for priority funding as part of the Levelling Up Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

As set out in the prospectus published at Budget, the index used for the Levelling Up Fund places areas into category one, two or three based on the local area's need for economic recovery and growth, improved transport connectivity, and regeneration.

We have published the index and further details of the methodology used to calculate the index of places set out in the prospectus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-additional-documents> .

■ Levelling Up Fund: Wales**Ben Lake:****[167292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with Welsh local authorities on the design of the Levelling Up Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

The Levelling Up Fund will invest in local infrastructure that will have a visible impact on people and their communities. The Government regularly engages with a wide range of stakeholders as part of ongoing work to support local economic growth as we recover from Covid-19.

■ Local Government: Meetings**Bob Stewart:****[165485]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the date by which local authorities in England can hold their AGMs to 31 July 2021 so that they have the opportunity to hold those meetings in person after the proposed end of covid-19 lockdown restrictions in June 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government keeps all policy under review. However, to extend the timeframe by which annual meetings are held 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.

■ Members: Correspondence**Robert Largan:****[165701]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 29 September 2020, reference RL12415.

Eddie Hughes:

As stated in the Department's initial response on 15 February, this correspondence has been transferred to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

■ Service Charges: Research

Justin Madders:

[165586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 157189, when he plans to publish (a) Lord Best's working group final report, (b) Cambridge University's report, and (C) the Government's response to both of those reports.

Eddie Hughes:

The report from the independent working group on the regulation of property agents, chaired by Lord Best, has been published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulation-of-property-agents-working-group-report> . The Government is considering the recommendations in the report alongside the report from Cambridge University on service charges. We believe that service charges should be transparent and communicated effectively, and that there should be a clear route to challenge or redress if things go wrong.

■ Shopping Centres: Coronavirus

Dr Luke Evans:

[165677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to engage with representatives of regional shopping centre providers to ensure that the needs of those centres are considered as part of the economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

Eddie Hughes:

Government meets regularly with representatives of both landlord and tenant sector bodies including those with interests in regional shopping centres. These meetings have informed Government policy towards the commercial property sector throughout the pandemic and continue to do so.

The Government is committed to supporting the retail sector and we are working closely with industry through these unprecedented times. To support businesses through the next stage of the pandemic, the Government is extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until the end of September 2021, will continue to provide eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties in England with 100% business rates relief until 30 June 2021, and will provide additional one-off 'Restart Grants' for businesses in England in the non-essential retail and hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors.

The Government has also announced a call for evidence from the wider commercial property industry, including lenders, investors and industry professionals, to help monitor the overall progress of negotiations on rent and other matters between landlords and tenants and to ensure that the voices of the harder to reach businesses in the sector are heard.

■ Towns Fund

Alexander Stafford: [165705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether there will be a further round of Towns Fund funding.

Eddie Hughes:

Towns will be able to benefit from the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund (LUF), which will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. The LUF prospectus published at Budget provides guidance for local areas on how to submit bids for the first round of funding for projects starting in 2021-22.

As set out in the prospectus, proposals can be submitted for town centre and regeneration projects from individual or groups of smaller towns that did not receive investment from the Towns Fund.

Jon Trickett: [166320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the criteria for allocation of funds to local authorities as part of the Towns Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

As part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund, 101 towns were selected to develop proposals for Town Deals. Details of this selection process are available in the summary of accounting officer advice, published on gov.uk here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-selection-summary-of-accounting-officer-advice/towns-fund-selection-process-summary-of-accounting-officer-ao-advice>.

Those 101 towns were asked to submit Town Investment Plans setting out their vision and strategy and detailing the projects they would like the Towns Fund to support. In June 2020, the Department published further guidance detailing the process and assessment criteria for those Town Investment Plans. This guidance can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/926422/Towns_Fund_further_guidance.pdf

All towns have now submitted their proposals and 52 towns have so far been offered Town Deals. Assessment continues for the remaining towns, with further announcements expected in due course.

■ Urban Areas: Finance

Steve Reed: [166444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to announce plans to allocate funding to towns not selected to bid for the Towns Fund in 2019.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government's new Levelling Up Fund (LUF) includes £300 million that had been set aside for a Towns Fund competition. As set out in the LUF prospectus, proposals can be submitted for town centre and regeneration projects from individual or groups of smaller towns that did not receive investment from the Towns Fund.

■ Veterans: Housing**Jack Lopresti:****[165504]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that veterans have equitable access to housing.

Eddie Hughes:

Delivering on the Armed Forces Covenant, the Government has taken steps to ensure that serving personnel and veterans are not disadvantaged when seeking to access social housing

The law was changed in 2012 so that seriously injured, ill or disabled Service personnel, and former members of the Armed Forces, with urgent housing needs are always given 'additional preference' (high priority) for social housing. At the same time, regulations were introduced which ensure that serving personnel and those within 5 years of having left the forces cannot be disqualified from social housing because of a local connection or residency requirement

Both provisions also apply to seriously injured and disabled Reservists and bereaved spouses of Service personnel who are required to leave accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence

In June 2020 we published new statutory guidance for local authorities to further improve access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-members-of-the-armed-forces> . The guidance:

- sets out how local authorities can identify applications from members of the Armed Forces community to ensure that they are considered appropriately
- ensures that members of the Armed Forces and veterans suffering from mental ill health are given appropriate priority for social housing; and
- makes clear that local authorities are expected to disapply any local connection requirement from divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence

We have also ensured that members of the Armed Forces have priority for government-funded shared ownership schemes. Service personnel retain their priority status for up to 24 months after service. If they die while in service, their priority can be transferred to their bereaved spouse or civil partner

In recognition of the unique nature of service to the Armed Forces, we have arranged that serving members, veterans within 5 years of leaving the services, divorced or

separated spouses or civil partners of serving members, or the spouse or civil partner of a deceased member of the Armed Forces (if their death was wholly or partly caused by their service) shall not have to meet any local connection criteria in order to qualify for a First Home. This will give them the opportunity to settle in the community of their choosing

First Homes are the Government's new home ownership scheme, designed to provide a sustained and ongoing supply of new homes sold to first-time buyers with a discount of at least 30% (in some areas, the discount could be as high as 50%). The discount will remain with the property each time it is sold and local authorities can apply additional criteria (such as a local connection test) to target specific groups with housing need.

JUSTICE

■ Crown Court

Claire Hanna:

[\[165696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what comparative information his Department holds on the number of cases going through the Crown Court in the (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2011-12 financial years. .

Chris Philp:

The latest published criminal court statistics can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics.

Data relating to Q4 2020 will be published on 24 March 2021, and data covering Q1 2021 will be published on 24 June 2021. The table below provides data from the latest 12 month period and the corresponding 12 month period 2011 and the total number of cases for the 2011/2012 financial year.

	PERIOD	ALL CASES	
Receipts	Disposals	Outstanding	
January 2011 to December 2011 inclusive	148,663	150,156	45,030
2011-12 financial year	145,626	148,094	42,123
January 2020 to December 2020 inclusive	100,340	83,069	55,189
February 2020 to January 2021 inclusive	99,390	81,731	56,544

The above are estimates of receipts ¹, disposals ² and outstanding ³ cases in the Crown Court in England and Wales, January 2011 to December 2011 (inclusive), 2011-12 financial year, January 2020 to December 2020 (inclusive) and February 2020 to January 2021 (inclusive, latest available).

Notes:

- 1) Receipts include cases sent direct from magistrates' courts and cases transferred in.
- 2) Disposals include cases where a disposal is recorded against each defendant and all their offences; and cases that are transferred out.
- 3) The outstanding case estimate is a cumulative count of ongoing cases within the Crown Court which have not reached disposal. It is not the number of receipts minus disposals due to exclusions made to the data. The outstanding estimates exclude cases which have a bench warrant issued – e.g. where a defendant cannot be brought before the court and the police have been directed to arrest them in order to bring them before the court as required. Once the bench warrant is executed and the individual is brought back before the court, the case will then form part of the outstanding case counts again.
- 4) Estimates for Q3 2020 exclude a small number of cases which have transitioned to the Common Platform system in the early adopter site (Derby Crown Court) from September 2020.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Jonathan Edwards:

[913512]

Whether he has had discussions with the (a) Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and (b) Home Secretary on declaring problem drug use a public health emergency.

Kit Malthouse:

The Prime Minister's Crime and Justice Taskforce (CJTF) was established last year to consider matters relating to the prevention of crime and the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System, including combating drug misuse. The Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Lord Chancellor are core members of this Taskforce.

In January, the Government announced £80 million to fund drug treatment in England in 2021/22 – the biggest increase in 15 years.

The majority of the funding will be allocated to Local Authorities, through universal grants, to enhance drug treatment, focused on reducing drug related crime and drug related deaths.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Contracts**Karl Turner:****[R] [166396]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors held a (a) civil and (b) criminal legal aid contract on (i) 1 March 2021 and (ii) 1 March 2020.

Alex Chalk:

Please note for the figures provided, firms may have more than one office. There are currently 1,104 firms who hold a Criminal Legal Aid Contract. There are currently 1,445 firms who hold a Civil Legal Aid Contract. This data is correct as at 8 March 2021.

As at March 2020 there were 1,150 firms holding a Criminal Legal Aid Contract, and 1,500 firms holding a Civil Legal Aid Contract.

The Legal Aid Agency frequently reviews market capacity to ensure there is adequate provision around the country and moves quickly to ensure provision where gaps may appear.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Finance**James Daly:****[R] [165704]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to support the long-term financial sustainability of criminal legal aid.

Alex Chalk:

The Government is taking steps to review the long-term sustainability of the Criminal Legal Aid market. Last year, as part of phase one of this review, we injected up to £51m per annum into Criminal Legal Aid, in areas of work that practitioners told us mattered the most. This year we launched the second phase, an independent review, led by Sir Christopher Bellamy QC, that will consider the sustainability of the whole Criminal Legal Aid system so that it can meet demand now and into the future, provide an effective and efficient service that ensures value for money for the taxpayer and provide defendants with high-quality advice from a diverse range of practitioners. Sir Christopher will submit his recommendations to the Lord Chancellor later this year.

■ Marriage: Children**Helen Hayes:****[167266]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy of (i) the current age of consent for marriage and (ii) parental or judicial consent to marry and (b) effect of that level of consent on the risk of 16 and 17 year olds being coerced into marriage.

Helen Hayes:

[\[167267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to review the age of consent for marriage; and what steps is he taking to help protect young people from coercion and forced marriage.

Alex Chalk:

Forced marriage, whatever the age, was made an offence in 2014. Since 2017, lifelong anonymity has been available to victims of forced marriage.

Evidence shows that the number of people marrying in England and Wales at 16 or 17 has been in decline over the years. In 2017, the latest year for which statistics are available, 183 of the people entering 235,910 opposite sex marriages did so at those ages.

Primary legislation would be required to raise the marriageable age to 18 and thereby to remove the existing requirement for parental or judicial consent at 16 or 17. The Government continues to listen carefully to the debate on the legal age of marriage. My noble friend Lord Wolfson, in his new role as Minister for family justice, will arrange to meet with my Honourable friend, the member for Mid Derbyshire, to discuss her Private Members' Bill on these important issues.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose:

[\[164408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 16 December 2020 and 8 February 2021 on behalf of a constituent, Mrs Frances Littlewood on shared parenting.

Chris Philp:

The Hon. Member's letters were transferred to us on 22 February from the Department for Education. I can confirm that a response has been sent to the Hon. Member today, 16 March 2021.

■ **Prisoners' Release: Females**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[165607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to make permanent the accommodation provision for vulnerable women leaving prison.

Alex Chalk:

We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. The service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing in Summer. It will be in operation during the next financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally, though the Spending Review 2021 will set out the approach for future years.

The service will take account of the needs of women, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required. Community Offender Managers, working together with local partners, will be responsible for ensuring that vulnerable female prison leavers with complex needs receive appropriate support and are provided with housing beyond the 12 weeks emergency accommodation.

To support its COVID-19 response, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) set up seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPT) to help find accommodation for offenders upon release. HMPPS are considering how the regional HPTs might be a feature of the future landscape going forward.

■ **Treatment of, and Outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System Independent Review: Wales**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[913480\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the progress of the implementation of the Lammy review in Wales.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice has published regular updates on the actions the department has taken in response to the Lammy Review recommendations.

Of the actions we said we would undertake 29 have been completed out of the 33 recommendations made in the Lammy Review. The remaining recommendations have a justifiable reason for their extended timescales.

Where a recommendation could not be implemented in full or exactly as set out in the Review, alternative approaches have been sought to achieve the same aim.

The recommendations of the Lammy Review apply to services delivered across both Wales and England. One recommendation needed to acknowledge health as a devolved service in Wales in its implementation.

TRANSPORT

■ **A158 and A55: Cameras**

Huw Merriman:

[\[167891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason a new design of surveillance camera has been installed at the (a) A55 near Chester and (b) A158 at Wragby; and which agencies access the data obtained by those cameras and for what purposes.

Rachel Maclean:

Highways England is not aware of any new cameras being installed on any section of the A55 near Chester that forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), for which it is responsible. The A158 is operated and maintained by Lincolnshire County Council, and it would be for the Council to comment on any new cameras implemented on it.

Local authorities are free to make their own decisions about the roads under their care, provided they take account of the relevant legislation. They are responsible for ensuring that their actions are within the law and are accountable to local people for their decisions and their performance. Local councillors are responsible for ensuring that local decisions about street infrastructure take account of the needs and opinions of local people.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[167324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what date he plans to publish the aviation recovery plan; and whether it is his policy to make Government support for the aviation industry dependant on commitments to reduce carbon emissions.

Robert Courts:

On 22 February the Prime Minister announced that the Global Travel Taskforce will develop a framework to facilitate greater international travel, whilst managing the risk of COVID cases and new variants, which will report on 12 April.

The government is also currently developing a strategic framework for the aviation sector, which will focus on how the sector can build back better to deliver a world leading aviation sector for the UK. We expect to publish this framework later this year.

This will include a thorough consideration of the sector's contribution to the government's target of a net zero economy by 2050.

■ Aviation: Londonderry

Paul Maynard:

[\[167843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason public service obligation flights from Londonderry to London are transferring from Southend to Stansted airport.

Robert Courts:

The Department's priority in funding the public service obligation (PSO) is to ensure that a service is maintained between City of Derry Airport and London. It is for the local authority, in conjunction with the airline, to determine how best to operate the service according to their objectives, including the choice of London airport.

■ Crewe Station

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[167989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to support the realisation of the Crewe Hub vision.

Andrew Stephenson:

Crewe is a vital railway asset and a strategically important location on the rail network, but as the existing infrastructure is complex, the solution has to be right for the arrival of HS2. In March 2018, the Secretary of State confirmed the Government's

support for the Crewe Hub vision, and announced that plans for HS2 Phase 2a will include 400m platforms at Crewe station to allow for the splitting and joining of HS2 services. In addition, a more efficient design is proposed for the platform on the Manchester independent lines and a change to the design of the southern connection to the HS2 lines.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Remote Working

Justin Madders:

[167250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the report by Deloitte on home working at the DVLA which was commissioned in June 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has thoroughly reviewed its processes and systems, with advice from a range of external experts, to understand what could be done to reduce the backlogs that had built up during the initial lockdown in 2020, not specifically on home working. Any reports which contain information relating to the DVLA's IT systems are not routinely placed in the public domain due to security requirements.

■ Driving Licences

Justin Madders:

[166467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2021 to Question 155126, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the section 88 provision of the Road Traffic Act 1988 on road safety.

Rachel Maclean:

Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 allows drivers who have submitted a valid application to renew a driving licence to continue to drive while waiting for their application to be processed. Strict criteria apply and these are outlined online [here](#). Where these criteria are met, there is no evidence that there is an adverse effect on road safety.

■ Driving Licences: EU Countries

Jonathan Edwards:

[167846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in EU countries on driving licence reciprocity.

Rachel Maclean:

We have confirmed agreement from all EU/EEA countries that UK motorists will continue to be able to drive in their territories on the basis of a UK Photocard licence, without the need for an additional International Driving Permit. All EU/EEA Member States, except for Italy, have also confirmed reciprocal arrangements for exchanging licences, meaning that a retest will not be required for resident UK nationals. We continue to explore options with Italy on this issue. Most of our agreements are permanent arrangements and a small number require formal agreements which will

be concluded before the end of this year. Where these agreements are needed, the UK has secured interim arrangements with the relevant Member States.

■ Eurostar: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[167937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic effect on the UK in the event that Eurostar services permanently ceased as a result of the financial effect of the covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government absolutely recognises that Eurostar has been severely impacted by COVID-19. We are also aware of the important economic benefits Eurostar offer the UK including providing high speed environmentally friendly links to our European neighbours and providing for circa 3,000 jobs directly and indirectly in the UK.

It is in our mutual interests to ensure the long-term sustainability of these important services as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, which is why we will continue to engage with both the company and France to discuss all support options available.

■ Heathrow Airport: Railways

Angela Richardson:

[\[167344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the development of a southern link to Heathrow Airport.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Work is underway to complete the Pre-Strategic Outline Business Case alongside the continued development of an appropriate commercial model to enable a 'market involved' approach for Southern Access to Heathrow (SAth).

The Department intends to provide further guidance to the market regarding the proposed commercial direction and next steps, including the process for selection of a development partner in Summer 2021.

Government remains committed to SAth's status as a 'pathfinder' project that can harness ideas and expertise from the private sector to fund, finance and deliver this scheme.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[167374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of responses (a) HS2 Ltd received to its consultation on HS2 Phase 2a and (b) received for other HS2 public consultations.

Andrew Stephenson:

There were 499 responses received to the consultation on Phase 2a that closed on 26 February, 2021. For three recent consultations on HS2, there were 326 (Phase 2b Western Leg Design Refinement Consultation 2 2020), 1,307 (Phase 2b Design

Refinement Consultation 2019) and 27 responses (Phase 2a Additional Provision 2 Environmental Statement and Supplementary Environmental Statement 2019). This information is made available online once the consultation responses are published.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Crewe

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[167373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to include the connection to the high speed line north of Crewe in plans for HS2 Phase 2b.

Andrew Stephenson:

Crewe is already a hub on the existing rail network and following a consultation in 2016, the Government confirmed its vision for a 'Crewe Hub', with up to 5 to 7 HS2 trains stopping per hour. Fully realising the Crewe Hub vision will require a junction north of Crewe back to the HS2 Phase 2b mainline and the design is being developed as part of the Northern Powerhouse Rail Strategic Outline Business Case.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Crewe Station

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[167372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Crewe station will be ready for the arrival of Phase 2a of HS2.

Andrew Stephenson:

Crewe is a vital railway asset and a strategically important location on the rail network, but as the existing infrastructure is complex, the solution has to be right for the arrival of HS2. In March 2018, the Secretary of State confirmed the Government's support for the Crewe Hub vision, and announced that plans for HS2 Phase 2a will include 400m platforms at Crewe station to allow for the splitting and joining of HS2 services. In addition, a more efficient design is proposed for the platform on the Manchester independent lines and a change to the design of the southern connection to the HS2 lines.

■ M1: Accidents

Sarah Champion:

[\[167875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many incidents involving (a) serious injury and (b) death occurred between Junctions 32 and 35A of the M1 in (i) each year since March 2017 and (ii) each of the three years before March 2017.

Rachel Maclean:

The number of fatal and serious reported road accidents between junctions 32 and 35A of the M1 from 2014 to 2019 can be found in the table below.

REPORTED ROAD ACCIDENTS WITH A PERSONAL INJURY BETWEEN JUNCTIONS 32 AND 35A ON THE M1¹ BY SEVERITY, 2014 - 2019

Calendar year	Fatal accidents	Serious accidents
2014	0	2
2015	1	2
2016	2	6
2017	1	4
2018	0	6
2019	1	5

Source: DfT, STATS19

1. does not include off ramps at junction 35a

■ **M1: South Yorkshire**

Sarah Champion:

[\[167876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many incidents in which a vehicle was stranded in a live lane have taken place between junctions 32 and 35A of the M1 in the three years prior to March 2017.

Rachel Maclean:

The table below records all breakdown incidents that have been recorded in a live lane between junctions 32 and 35A of the M1, in both directions in the three years prior to March 2017.

MONTH/YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	11	6	65	42
February	5	5	75	58
March	10	4	80	51
April	20	3	75	53
May	8	15	79	63
June	12	19	72	77
July	15	23	62	67

MONTH/YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017
August	19	26	64	64
September	13	27	59	49
October	11	39	52	66
November	17	55	45	71
December	26	46	57	68

There has been significant interest in the number of live lane breakdowns on motorways. It is important to note that live lane breakdown data is not a reliable safety indicator to correlate with serious or fatal casualties.

■ Ports: Sefton

Bill Esterson:

[\[167861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the inland port and connectivity concept of Sefton Council.

Robert Courts:

The Department is aware of Sefton Council's inland port and connectivity concept. It contains some interesting and innovative ideas for improving connectivity through conventional and non-conventional means. In the first instance it will be for the Liverpool City Region Port Access Steering Group to assess further as to how it contributes to its multi modal approach to addressing connectivity to the Port of Liverpool, and wider regional transport considerations.

■ Railway Network

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[167910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on reversing the Beeching cuts and restoring stations in (a) East Ardsley and Thorpe and (b) more widely.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government has pledged £500m to the Restoring Your Railway fund to reverse the Beeching cuts and restore lines and stations.

I understand that my Hon Friend has supported a bid to the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund for the restoration of a railway station in East Ardsley. The bid is currently being assessed and we expect to announce the outcomes in the summer.

■ Railways: Carbon Emissions

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[167936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has he made of the role of the National Infrastructure Bank in decarbonising the rail network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

A core objective of the new UK Infrastructure Bank will be to tackle climate change, and in particular to support the transition to net zero by 2050. The Bank will focus on the economic infrastructure sectors covered by the National Infrastructure Strategy, which includes transport, and will make case-by-case assessments on the merits of individual projects.

As the Bank is established, my department will work with HM Treasury to assess its role in supporting rail decarbonisation.

■ Railways: Franchises

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[167337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to bring further rail franchises under the operator of last resort.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Operator of Last Resort (OLR) function exists to discharge the Secretary of State's duties under Section 30 of the Railways Act 1993. In deciding whether to transfer an operator to the OLR, the Secretary of State has regard to the Statement of Policy on the exercise of the Secretary of State's power under section 26(1) of the Railways Act 1993.

■ Railways: Wolverhampton South West

Stuart Anderson:

[\[167950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to enhance the connectivity of the Wolverhampton South West constituency to the rest of the rail network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I understand that my Hon. Friend has submitted a bid to round three of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund to reopen a station in the Tettenhall area. Outcomes will be announced this summer.

■ Roads: Romford

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[167168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on using the funding outlined in the Road Investment Strategy announced as part of Budget 2021 to fund upgrades to Gallows Corner in Romford.

Rachel Maclean:

The Gallows Corner junction on the A1 in Romford is on Transport for London's road network. A scheme to improve the junction is in the Department's Major Road Network programme. My officials are working with TfL and expect to receive an Outline Business Case next year.

TREASURY■ **Bradford and Bingley and NRAM: Investment****Philip Davies:**[\[165483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2020 to question 160588 on Bradford and Bingley: Investment, if he will publish a breakdown of the figures for (a) Bradford and Bingley and (b) NRAM.

John Glen:

The figures in the OBR's March 2021 Economic and Fiscal Outlook encapsulate the fiscal impact of the government's interventions in both Bradford & Bingley plc (B&B) and NRAM Limited. More information on the financial record of B&B and NRAM are available in B&B's Annual Report and Accounts, available on the UK Asset Resolution (UKAR) website.

■ **Bradford and Bingley: Investment****Philip Davies:**[\[165482\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 9 March 2021 of Question 160588 on Bradford & Bingley: Investment, if he will ensure Bradford & Bingley shareholders at the time it was taken into public hands receive a share of the profits that have been generated to the public purse by Bradford & Bingley since it was taken into public ownership.

John Glen:

Following the nationalisation of Bradford & Bingley (B&B) in 2008, the then government made the Bradford & Bingley plc Compensation Scheme Order, which provided that former shareholders should receive compensation in line with their value immediately before the government stepped in.

On 5 July 2010, Peter Clokey published his independent valuation establishing that the shares of B&B had no value at the time of nationalisation, and shareholders would have received nothing had the bank been allowed to fail. No compensation was therefore found to be payable to former shareholders.

This has been tested in the Courts and the government considers the matter closed.

■ Computer Software: Capital Allowances

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[167942\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether investment in software can qualify for 130 per cent super-deduction capital allowance in 2021-22 and 2022-23 under section 815 of the Corporation Tax Act 2009.

Jesse Norman:

The super-deduction capital allowance will allow companies to reduce their taxable profits by 130% of the value of their investment in plant and machinery.

Investment in software can be classified as either a revenue expenditure, in which case it is deductible for tax purposes, or a capital expenditure, in which case it is generally addressed through the intangibles regime instead. This means software would be ineligible for the super-deduction.

However, if a company wishes, they can choose to make an election under s815 Corporation Tax Act 2009 to remove software from the intangibles regime and instead claim capital allowances. In this case, the super-deduction will be available.

■ Corporation Tax: Tax Allowances

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[167859\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the level of profit shifting into the UK as a result of the corporation tax super deduction in (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

Jesse Norman:

The UK has been at the forefront of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Project, which seeks to address the gaps and mismatches in the global tax system used to shift profits artificially to low or no tax locations where there is little or no economic activity.

The Government has already taken decisive action to ensure the UK's tax laws remain robust and that multinational companies operating in the UK pay the right amount of tax on the profits earned here, including Corporate Interest Restriction rules (which raise approximately £1 billion a year), hybrid mismatch rules (expected to raise £900 million between 2016/17 and 2020/21) and the requirement for large businesses to provide HMRC with a country-by-country breakdown of their profits, tax and assets.

The super-deduction benefits businesses that have real physical substance (plant and machinery) in the UK, not those who try to shift profits artificially. The Government keeps the tax system under review at all times and will take any necessary action to address any emerging risks.

■ Directors: Debts

Chi Onwurah:

[\[166415\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support business directors that have taken on debt as a personal liability to cover costs incurred as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has provided over £407 billion in total fiscal support throughout this crisis to protect people's jobs and livelihoods, and to support businesses and public services across the UK.

Business directors who pay themselves a salary through a PAYE scheme may be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), which has been extended to the end of September. However, some directors pay themselves in large part through dividends, while taking a small salary. Dividends are not covered by this scheme nor by the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) because income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages. Under HMRC's current reporting mechanisms it is not possible to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources.

However, business directors can benefit from several other elements of the Government's support package. Business directors are able to benefit from the Government's support for businesses, which includes grants, a moratorium on commercial evictions, and government guaranteed loans. The Government has also boosted the generosity of the welfare system through a temporary £20 a week increase in the Universal Credit standard allowance and has announced a one-off payment of £500 in April to eligible Working Tax Credit claimants across the UK. The Government has also increased the Local Housing Allowance rates for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, enhanced Statutory Sick Pay, and is providing council tax support through local authorities.

■ Financial Institutions: Disclosure of Information

Zarah Sultana:

[\[165686\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that banks, building societies and other financial institutions report accurate financial data to HMRC; and what redress is available in the event of financial institutions' non-compliance.

Jesse Norman:

Banks, building societies and other financial institutions are required to provide a variety of information returns to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on an accurate and timely basis. They are subject to HMRC's usual compliance processes and if the information provided is late or found to be inaccurate following a compliance check, the taxpayer may be subject to penalties.

The UK's largest businesses, which includes many financial institutions, are subject to an enhanced risk review, as part of HMRC's Business Risk Review process.

In addition to this, over 98% of banks and building societies are signatories to the Code of Practice on Taxation for Banks. Their commitments under the Code include complying with their tax obligations, which include providing accurate information to HMRC, as well as maintaining a transparent relationship with HMRC. If a signatory is found to be in breach of these commitments, HMRC are able to disclose this, naming the bank in their annual report on the Code.

■ Free Zones: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[167923\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of the (a) number of jobs that would be created by a freeport in Wales, (b) type of jobs that freeport would create and (c) other economic impacts of that freeport.

Steve Barclay:

Freeports will be national hubs for international trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK by attracting new businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country.

We want to ensure that the whole of the UK can benefit, not just England. We are having ongoing discussions with the Welsh government to establish at least one Freeport in Wales as soon as possible.

■ Journalism: Self-employed

Ruth Jones:

[\[166566\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to support freelance journalists ineligible for the Government's covid-19 support schemes.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September 2021, with a fourth and a final fifth grant. This provides certainty to business as the economy reopens and means the SEISS continues to be one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The Government has also announced a major improvement in access to the self-employed scheme. As the deadline for 2019-20 tax returns has now passed, HMRC will use these tax returns for the fourth and fifth grants, provided they were submitted by 2 March. This means more than 600,000 people, many of whom became self-employed in 2019-20, may now be able to claim the fourth and fifth grants, bringing the total number of people who could be eligible to 3.7 million.

The fourth SEISS grant, available to claim from late April, will be worth 80% of average trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of annual profits, and capped at £7,500 in total. The fifth and final SEISS grant,

covering May to September will include a turnover test (similar to those in operation in other countries' schemes) to ensure that the most generous support is targeted at those who need it the most. This will determine whether individuals can continue to receive a grant worth 80% of three months' average trading profits, capped at £7,500 or a 30% grant, capped at £2,850. The final grant can be claimed from late July.

Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the support available including tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

The temporary £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance has been extended for six months, and the government has extended the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for three months, to the end of July 2021, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings.

The Government has extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) until September 2021. The CJRS is available to individuals regardless of their employment contract or employment rights, as long as they meet the relevant eligibility criteria, making the scheme resilient to many different ways of working. This means freelancers and those on short term contracts could be eligible for the CJRS if they are on PAYE and meet the eligibility criteria. However, the decision to furlough staff is ultimately a choice for employers, which also means they will require an employer through which they can be furloughed.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Robert Largan: [\[165700\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 27 July 2020, reference RL9092.

Kemi Badenoch:

HMT responded to the Member on 15 January 2021. A further copy has been sent by email.

■ **National Infrastructure Bank: Environment Protection**

Caroline Lucas: [\[166376\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the UK Infrastructure Bank plans to limit its funding to projects that are compatible with (a) currently legislated carbon budgets, (b) the Paris climate agreement, (c) the Government's nature and biodiversity goals and priorities at national and international level and the (d) Sustainable Development Goals; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [\[166377\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if will make it is his policy to require that the UK Infrastructure Bank has a list of excluded projects including, but not limited to (a) infrastructure related to the extraction of fossil fuels, (b) airport expansion, (c)

incinerators, (d) new roads and (e) other high carbon infrastructure; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[166379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) process and (b) timeline are for (i) setting the investment principles of the UK Infrastructure Bank, and (ii) assessing the potential for the bank's environmental objectives to be broadened to include projects that would enhance the UK's natural capital and exclude projects that would deplete it; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

As set out in the Budget, the UK Infrastructure Bank will pursue two core policy objectives through its interventions in the infrastructure market: to help tackle climate change, particularly meeting our net zero emissions target by 2050; and to support regional and local economic growth. While the Bank's initial focus will be on climate change mitigation and resilience, the Government will review the case for broadening this to include other areas such as improving the UK's natural capital, before bringing forward legislation to put the Bank on a statutory footing.

The Government will also publish a set of investment principles for the Bank later in the spring to help the bank assess what projects should be in scope. The Bank will make independent investment decisions and will need to develop assessment criteria to decide which investments it will take forward in line with its objectives. This will include environmental impacts. Following its launch later in the spring, the Bank will publish a document, developed in consultation with HM Treasury, setting out its approach to assessment in pursuit of its mandate.

■ National Infrastructure Bank: Public Appointments

Caroline Lucas:

[\[166378\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that the governance structure of the UK Infrastructure Bank will (a) require that the bank be headed by someone with public banking experience, (b) include the range of expertise needed to make decisions about the suitability of projects including, but not limited to, engineering and scientific knowledge, (c) include representatives from all of the nations of the UK, and (d) be representative of the UK population; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The UK Infrastructure Bank will be a world-class institution, staffed by people from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, with expertise to help meet the government's objectives on economic growth, levelling up, and transitioning to net zero. The Bank will be headquartered in Leeds, and will operate UK-wide, supporting projects in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

The recruitment process for the Chair of the Bank is currently underway. When evaluating candidates, the selection panel will review applicants against a range of relevant criteria, including commercial or financial business leadership.

HM Treasury will publish a framework document later in the spring outlining further details of the Bank's governance and its relationship with government.

■ **Revenue and Customs: Standards**

Anneliese Dodds: [\[167944\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps are being taken by HMRC to ensure there is uniform interpretation of customs rules at different entry points into the UK.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC are supporting and building trader capability to ensure compliance across different entry points in the UK during staged controls and when full controls are put in place in January 2022.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme**

Caroline Lucas: [\[165488\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons businesses eligible for the fifth self-employed grant announced in Budget 2021 will be eligible to claim the equivalent of 80 per cent of three months average trading profits capped at £7,500 when the grant period covers five months from May to September; and what plans he has to help meet lost income for the remaining two months.

Caroline Lucas: [\[165489\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to provide financial support for people potentially eligible for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) prior to being able to make a claim to either the fourth or fifth SEISS grants; and for what reasons that scheme does not deliver parity with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme with regard to the payment schedule.

Jesse Norman:

The Government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth grant. The fourth SEISS grant, available to claim from late April, will be worth 80% of average trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of annual profits, and capped at £7,500 in total. Further details of the fifth SEISS grant will be published in due course.

Grants are now based on 2019-20 tax returns which is the most up to date information HMRC holds for self-employed individuals. This means that the Government is now in a position to provide support to hundreds of thousands of newly eligible self-employed individuals.

Using these returns requires time to deliver, due to the increased population and new data. Guidance on how to claim the fourth grant will be available in due course.

The SEISS and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are very different schemes. The CJRS pays for hours which are not worked, while SEISS claimants can work while claiming. Furthermore, as the Chancellor announced, employers will

be required to contribute to CJRS payments as the economy reopens. The SEISS is not intended to provide a month-by-month replacement of income. Due to the volatility of self-employed income and the lack of granular data that HMRC hold on self-employed trading profits, precise mapping of income replacement month by month is not possible. Instead, the SEISS provides a lump sum payment to support eligible self-employed individuals whose businesses have been affected by coronavirus.

The SEISS is just one part of a wider package of support for the self-employed. The temporary £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance has been extended for six months, and the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for three months, to the end of July 2021, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition, they may also have access to other elements of the package, including Restart Grants, the Recovery Loan scheme, business rates relief, and other business support schemes.

■ Social Enterprises: Tax Allowances

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[167943\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to increase the uptake of the Social Investment Tax Relief.

Jesse Norman:

The Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) was introduced in 2014 to encourage risk finance investments in qualifying social enterprises. HMRC statistics show that up to 2018-19, about 110 enterprises have used the scheme to raise £11.2 million.

At the Budget on 3 March, the Government announced that SITR would be extended for two years, until April 2023, to continue support for qualifying investments into social enterprises. SITR will be extended with its current eligibility rules and targeting, to ensure that the scheme continues to focus on higher risk social enterprises that face the greatest difficulties in accessing finance.

The Government keeps all taxes and reliefs under review in order to ensure they continue to meet policy objectives in a way that is fair and effective. The Government previously published a Call for Evidence in 2019 on SITR's use to date. The Government will publish a Summary of Responses to this on 23 March.

■ Wholesale Trade: Food

Julian Sturdy:

[\[165520\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to create a version of Scotland's Wholesale Food and Drink Resilience Fund for England.

Kemi Badenoch:

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, the Government has protected people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK. Food

and drink wholesalers have been eligible for a number of economic support schemes, including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme;
- The opportunity to defer VAT payments due between 20 March and 30 June 2020; and
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme for small businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000, with no interest payments or fees for the first 12 months.

Wholesalers in England may also receive further support with their fixed costs from local authorities through the £1.6 billion in funding made available for discretionary Additional Restrictions Grants to support local businesses.

Businesses may also be eligible for other elements of the Government's support package including government-backed loans, tax deferrals, and general and sector-specific grants. The Government urges businesses to visit the online Coronavirus Business Support Finder Tool for tailored information on how to access support available to them.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Gay Conversion Therapy

Ian Mearns:

[\[163678\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the prevalence of LGBTQ+ conversion therapy providers; and what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent the (a) advertising and (b) delivery of conversion therapy services.

Alicia Kearns:

[\[163732\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of legislation in other jurisdictions banning conversion therapy.

Kemi Badenoch:

We are following through with our commitment to end conversion therapy in the UK and will bring forward plans to do so shortly. We have undertaken research to understand practices, experiences and impacts associated with conversion therapy and will publish this in due course. Officials are also in discussion with international policy counterparts, to fully understand the detail and impact of other jurisdictions' measures, in order to inform the UK's next steps.

Alongside this work, officials are reviewing the current legislative framework and engaging a number of relevant departments across Whitehall. We have engaged experts and survivors to understand how Government action may impact them and continue to engage with key stakeholders.

The Government is working at pace on ending conversion therapy and will outline in due course how it intends to proceed with an effective response.

■ **LGBT People: Coronavirus**

Martyn Day:

[\[162659\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what research she has conducted on the health, economic, and social effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the LGBT+ community.

Kemi Badenoch:

Government vigorously scrutinises research from a wide range of sources on the impact of Covid-19 on minority groups, including the LGBT population. We routinely monitor research by academics and other agencies published in this area.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Children: Maintenance**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[167355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to reduce the time taken for child maintenance payment assessments.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) has introduced the Apply Online Service for customers which has reduced the average application time from 45 minutes to 15 minutes. This service also has a webchat function to support customers applying online.

■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

Andy McDonald:

[\[164496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147867 and the Answer of 26 February to Question 155052, whether the Health and Safety Executive, at its board meeting in the week beginning 22 February 2021, agreed to review the Executive's Enforcement Management Model classification of covid-19.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 11 March 2021]: At HSE's Board meeting on 23 rd of February 2021 the HSE Board was assured that operational colleagues routinely review classifications under the Enforcement Management Model (EMM) to ensure they reflect the latest scientific evidence, and that the approach HSE has taken to the classification of Covid-19 is consistent with that. The classification of Covid-19 will be reviewed in future as part of that routine process.

■ **Employment: Health**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[166494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Government plans to publish its response to the 2019 Health is everyone's business consultation.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government is committed to reducing the disability employment gap and supporting disabled people and those with health conditions to thrive at work. We received a good response from a range of stakeholders. The Government is considering the timing of the response in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We anticipate that a response will be available shortly.

■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**Grahame Morris:****[167847]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit claims relating to work-related chest disease and Dupuytren's contracture have been (a) considered and (b) awarded since that condition was included on the list of prescribed industrial diseases.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department publishes quarterly statistics on claims and assessments under the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) scheme in Great Britain here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-injuries-disablement-benefit-quarterly-statistics>

Statistics for IIDB claims and payable awards made for work-related chest diseases and for Dupuytren's contracture in each quarter to June 2020 are available in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. Spreadsheet 167847 [Spreadsheet 167847.xlsx]

■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Applications**Grahame Morris:****[167848]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new claims for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit have been determined in the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department publishes quarterly statistics on claims and assessments under the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) scheme in Great Britain here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-injuries-disablement-benefit-quarterly-statistics>

Statistics for IIDB decisions made in each quarter are available in table 2.4 of each quarterly publication, with the latest available to June 2020.

Grahame Morris:**[167849]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit are pending a decision.

Justin Tomlinson:

Due to COVID-19, since March face-to-face assessments for all disability benefits have been suspended, however we have now begun paper-based assessments for certain prescribed diseases for the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB). For successful applications to IIDB, award payments will be backdated to the date of application to ensure claimants will not lose out on payments they are entitled to. Reassessment case awards have been extended to ensure that payments continue unhindered on those cases. Any deteriorations which would have meant an increase in award, will be backdated once face-to-face assessments recommence, to ensure no one is left out of pocket.

On 15 March 2021 there were around 6090 Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit claims outstanding.

Source: Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit Management Information

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Medical Examinations**Grahame Morris:**[\[167850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to ensure that healthcare professionals conducting medical assessments for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit have (a) adequate medical qualifications and (b) experience in the field that relates to a claimant's conditions.

Grahame Morris:[\[167851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will routinely provide industrial injuries disablement benefit claimants with details of the medical qualifications of the healthcare professionals conducting their medical assessment.

Justin Tomlinson:

IIDB assessments are conducted by Registered Medical Practitioners (doctors) who undertake a training course with examination followed by a period of supervised sessions with an experienced mentor and then 100% audit of their work prior to formal approval by DWP to carry out assessments.

■ Kickstart Scheme**Seema Malhotra:**[\[167206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many kickstart placements (a) have started and (b) are currently advertised as vacancies via Jobcentres in each (i) constituency, (ii) local authority district and (iii) region and nation as at 8 March 2021.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [165550](#)

■ **Kickstart Scheme: Publicity**

Seema Malhotra:

[167868]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations she has received on the potential merits of (a) Kickstart gateways and (b) participating employers being able to advertise Kickstart placements in addition to their promotion in jobcentres.

Mims Davies:

Although some employers and Gateway organisations have suggested that they would like to advertise their Kickstart jobs, this has been resisted to ensure that these funded opportunities are provided to the young people most likely to benefit from them.

Kickstart has been created in response to the Covid19 pandemic, with the key aim of offering jobs to those young people aged between 16 and 24 claiming Universal Credit who are most at risk of long term unemployment. It is a central part of the scheme design that a young person can only access a Kickstart job through a Work Coach referral. Work Coaches will identify young people who meet these criteria and who are most likely to benefit from the support offered by the Kickstart Scheme. The Work Coach will match those young people with suitable Kickstart job opportunities and encourage them to apply.

■ **Kickstart Scheme: Small Businesses**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[167354]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many businesses based have applied for the Kickstart scheme with less than 30 job placements on offer since the 30-placement minimum rule was removed in (a) Wakefield, (b) West Yorkshire and (c) England.

Mims Davies:

We are not able to publish this information at this time. For the latest statistics on the Kickstart Scheme, I refer my honourable member to oral question 912997.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Dentistry

James Wild:

[\[122903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many university places were available to study dentistry in each year since 2015.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 26 January 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

The attached table shows the intake of dental students in England for each academic year since 2015.

Attachments:

1. [PQ122903 TABLE.docx](#)
2. [Revised table Academic year.docx](#)

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Kickstart Scheme

Seema Malhotra:

[\[167207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employers were participating in the kickstart scheme in each (a) constituency, (b) local authority and (c) each region and nation of the UK as at 8 March 2021.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 March 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Mims Davies:

~~I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [165550](#)~~

I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ 165550. Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency.

As of the 12th March 2021, there have been over 900 unique gateway applications approved and over 1,200 unique employer bids accepted on the Kickstart Scheme. Over 150,000 jobs have now been approved and over 5,000 young people have started their placements.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Publication of the Government Response to the Fire Safety Consultation

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse): [\[HCWS851\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Greenhalgh) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today, the Government publishes its response to the Fire Safety Consultation held from 20 July -12 October 2020.

This public consultation was a vital step in a process to ensure that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the 'Fire Safety Order') continues to be fit for purpose as part of the Government's consideration of the reform of the wider building safety landscape. The consultation sought views on a number of proposals to:

- Strengthen the FSO and improve compliance in all regulated premises (section 1).
- Implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report recommendations that require a change in the law (section 2).
- Improve the effectiveness of consultation between building control bodies and fire and rescue authorities on planning for building work and the arrangements for the handover of fire safety information (section 3).

We received feedback from over 250 stakeholders with an interest in building and fire safety, including residents, responsible persons and enforcing authorities, which we have used to inform our response. The Government has listened, and now we are taking action.

We will be bringing forward a number of changes to the Fire Safety Order, legislating where necessary primarily via the Building Safety Bill, as well as through building regulations fire safety guidance, to strengthen fire safety in all regulated buildings. We will:

- Improve the quality of fire risk assessments by requiring that a Responsible Person (RP) must not appoint a person to assist them with undertaking a fire risk assessment unless they are competent and a requirement on all RPs to record their completed fire risk assessments and prescribed information. The name and/or organisation of any person engaged by the RP to undertake all or part of the fire risk assessment will also need to be recorded to assist enforcing authorities undertaking enforcement action to establish compliance.
- Improve the identification of RPs by requiring them to record (and update as necessary) who they are, and the extent of their responsibility under the Fire Safety Order, and to include a UK based address. This will sit alongside a further proposal to require all RPs to take reasonable steps to identify themselves to each other

where they share or have duties in respect of the same premises. A new requirement will also be introduced to ensure that information is transferred effectively between outgoing RPs and their replacements.

- Amend existing provision relating to statutory guidance for RPs to include provision that failure to follow such guidance may be considered in court proceedings for breaches of the Order as evidence of such a breach, and conversely proof of following guidance may be considered as evidence of compliance.
- Increase the level of fines from Level 3 (£1,000) to Level 5 (unlimited) for offences in relation to the impersonation of an inspector, failure to comply with specific requirements imposed by an inspector, and failure to comply with requirements relating to the installation of luminous tube signs.
- Amend the guidance in Approved Document B of the Building Regulations to require all new buildings above 11 metres to provide a readily locatable, accessible and secure Premises Information Box, to tie in with the height threshold for new buildings to require sprinklers and signage.

The Fire Safety Consultation consulted on a range of areas to strengthen fire safety. Where further work is required to develop policy, we will continue to consider the findings of the consultation and engage with the sector and stakeholders to inform ongoing policy development in these areas.

The Fire Safety Consultation also included proposals to implement recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report requiring changes to the law. We will consider these proposals further in light of the consultation responses and – subject to the Fire Safety Bill gaining Royal Assent – intend to lay Regulations before the second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One Report which will deliver on the Inquiry's recommendations. These will include measures around checking fire doors and lifts.

Three of these proposals related to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). The Government's commitment to implementing the Inquiry's recommendations remains undimmed, as does our commitment to ensure those most affected by the tragic events at Grenfell Tower – the bereaved and survivors – continue to have a voice in their implementation. It is important that we get this right and ensure the voice of residents and those likely to be affected by the proposals are heard. That is why we have decided to undertake a further consultation this spring to seek additional views on the complex issue of personal emergency evacuation plans in relation to the proposals to implement the relevant Grenfell recommendations. Further details about this will be available soon on the Government's website.

Finally, proposals to improve the engagement between Building Control Bodies and Fire Authorities in reviewing plans for building work and for the handover of fire safety information to the Responsible Person on completion will be implemented through changes to legislation and guidance.

We are determined to ensure that the public feel safe and are safe from fire in all regulated premises regardless of where they live, stay or work. These changes, alongside the Fire Safety Bill, Building Safety Bill and planned overhaul of the statutory guidance provided under the Fire Safety Order are important steps needed to strengthen the whole regulatory system for building and fire safety. Taken together they will help to ensure there is greater accountability and responsibility for fire and structural safety issues throughout the lifecycle of all buildings regulated by the Fire Safety Order.

Further detail of the changes we are making can be found in the consultation response. The consultation response will be available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>. A copy will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.