



Daily Report

Thursday, 18 March 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 18 March 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:49 P.M., 18 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Batteries: Recycling

Chi Onwurah:

[\[166410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2021 to Question 153244 on Electric Vehicles: Production, what steps he is taking to support and grow the UK's lithium battery recycling capabilities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In order to maximise the economic and environmental opportunities of the transition to zero emission vehicles, the UK Government is supporting the creation of a circular economy for electric vehicle batteries.

This includes supporting the innovation, infrastructure, and regulatory environment for a UK battery recycling industry, including reuse in second life applications (such as energy storage) and development of efficient recycling techniques to extract maximum value.

The Government has allocated £318m to the Faraday Battery Challenge which is playing a leading role in promoting the reuse and recycling of battery components. The Faraday Institution's £10 million 'ReLib' (Reuse and Recycling of Lithium-ion Batteries) research project is developing the technological, economic and legal infrastructure to allow high percentages of the materials in lithium-ion batteries at the end of their first life to be reused or recycled.

The Automotive Transformation Fund has been designed to support strategic investments in the electric vehicle supply chain, the scope of which includes battery recycling facilities.

■ Boilers: Government Assistance

Stuart Anderson:

[\[167319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what financial support the Government is providing to low-income households that need new or replacement boilers.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Energy Company Obligation scheme (ECO), worth £640 million per annum, sets an obligation on larger energy suppliers to install energy efficiency and heating measures in the homes of low income and vulnerable households in Great Britain. A capped amount of replacement boilers is allowed, though there is no cap when certain insulation measures are installed alongside.

Under the current iteration of ECO, over 157,000 boilers had been installed up to the end of December 2020.

Furthermore, under the Warm Home Discount (WHD), the Industry Initiatives element of the scheme allows suppliers to support low income and vulnerable households through a range of measures, including replacement boilers in certain circumstances.

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Chi Onwurah: [\[166411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on businesses with a rateable value above £51,000.

Paul Scully:

The Government engages closely with businesses and local partners to understand the impact of Covid-19 across all sectors of the economy.

Substantial grant support has been made available throughout the pandemic including to those businesses with a rateable value of £51,000 and above.

Where those businesses are currently required by law to close, the Local Restrictions Support Grant enables local authorities to make grant payments of the equivalent of £4,500 per six-week period of closure.

Businesses with a rateable value above £51,000 that were required by law to close at the beginning of the January lockdown are also able to access one-off grants of £9,000 through the Closed Business Lockdown Payment.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that a further iteration of grants will be made available to enable businesses to reopen as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Restart Grants will offer businesses further one-off grants of up to £18,000. Further details will be made available in due course.

■ **Business: Government Assistance**

Chi Onwurah: [\[168909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2021 to Question 162599, on Business: Finance, in which of the files on the referenced url is the methodology for calculating the funds paid.

Paul Scully:

The link provided in the answer given to Question 162599 was a link to local authority level allocations summary which required you to click through to the guidance released on the methods for calculating allocations for the Additional Restrictions Grant and Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open). The direct links to the relevant guidance is as below.

For the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), guidance sets out the original method for allocating funds: 'Local Authorities will receive a one-off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head in each eligible Local Authority when LCAL 3 or widespread national restrictions are imposed.'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966854/20210304_Additional_Restrictions_Grant_-_LA_guidance.pdf

For the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) covering the periods of local restrictions between 1st August to 5th November and 2nd December to 5th January the guidance sets out that funding was allocated on the basis of Valuation Office Agency data on the number of businesses in scope in those areas of England subject to local Covid restrictions for the period in question.

Guidance for the 1st August to 5th November period can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966860/20210304_Local_Restrictions_Support_Grant_OPEN_applicable_1_Aug_-_5_Nov_-_LA_guidance.pdf.

Guidance for the 2nd December to 5th January period can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966858/20210304_Local_Restrictions_Support_Grant_OPEN_applicable_2_December_-_LA_guidance.pdf.

■ Climate Change

Wera Hobhouse:

[165635]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Energy Charter Treaty on the ability of his Department to tackle climate change.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK remains deeply committed to domestic and international efforts to tackle climate change and we are working hard to lower emissions. Member States of the Energy Charter Treaty are currently engaged in a process to modernise the Treaty. The UK will seek to ensure the Treaty helps to deliver the Government's energy priorities, which include tackling climate change and supporting the global clean energy transition.

■ Climate Change: Carbon Emissions

Siobhan Baillie:

[167361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how the (a) UK and (b) Global carbon budget informs the Government's Climate Change mitigation strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government's independent advisers, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) advised that reaching net zero by 2050 is the right target for the UK, which is consistent with the UK's contribution to reducing global emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. We followed their advice by legislating for net zero in 2019.

When setting our carbon budgets, which step down towards our 2050 target, we follow the requirements set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. These include taking

account of several matters including “scientific knowledge about climate change” and “circumstances at European and international level”.

We will carefully consider the CCC’s advice ahead of setting the sixth carbon budget in legislation later this year. Following the setting of this target, we will be publishing a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26 which sets out the Government’s vision for how we transition to a net zero economy.

■ Competition and Markets Authority: Staff

John McDonnell:

[\[166306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will place copies of the CMA’s internal reports (a) BAME Performance Ratings Review and (b) Equality Reporting Principles in the Library; and what assessment he has made of the reason for the Senior Civil Service performance management outcomes for BAME staff over the age of 55, and those under the age of 24 and female staff working for the Competition and Markets Authority in the 2019-20 performance year.

Paul Scully:

The CMA follows the guidance set out by Civil Service HR for the performance management of Senior Civil Servants (SCS).

It comprises individual performance planning and assessment together with personal development. The performance of job holders is assessed by taking account of both ‘what’ they have achieved, and ‘how’ they have achieved it. In the 2019 – 2020 performance year, the CMA had no SCS BAME staff over the age of 55, or under the age of 24. The data relating to the distribution of ratings for male and female members of the SCS is summarised below.

	MALE	FEMALE
CMA SCS profile	56.6%	43.4%
Performance management outcomes		
Top	71.1%	28.9%
Achieved	50.7%	49.3%
Low	66.7%	33.3%
Not required (due to insufficient time in post)	20.0%	80.0%

The BAME Performance Ratings Review was produced to allow a deeper analysis of the reasons and/or factors which could influence the distribution of performance ratings amongst BAME non-SCS staff. This work supports the CMA’s commitment to fully embed a diverse and inclusive culture within the CMA as detailed within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020 – 2024, and reinforces the work of the

Race Action Plan 2020 – 2021. The Equality Reporting Principles set out the principles used for reporting performance rating distribution and CMA Staff Recognition Scheme outcomes for the purposes of the 2020 – 2021 non-SCS pay negotiation process. The CMA does not publish these documents externally as they were produced for internal purposes.

It is recognised that there are differences in SCS performance management outcomes for men and women. As detailed within the 2019 – 2020 Gender Pay Gap Report the CMA has already made progress in reducing its gender pay gap through a range of initiatives, and this continues to be an area of focus for the CMA.

■ **Coronavirus: Industrial Health and Safety**

Charlotte Nichols:

[166584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the evidential basis was for his decision to allow tradespeople to carry out non-essential works in other people's home during the the covid-19 lockdown announced on 5 January 2021.

Paul Scully:

Government guidance on the current national restrictions enables tradespeople to work in peoples' homes if it is a necessary part of their job. The Government is clear that businesses in certain sectors can remain open if they can adhere to Safer Working guidance. We continue to keep the guidance under review and will update it in line with new scientific evidence as it arises. When visiting peoples' homes, tradespeople should follow the [guidance](#) and take appropriate Covid-19 secure precautions.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective clothing**

Fleur Anderson:

[169065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to classify scrubs as personal protective equipment.

Paul Scully:

Scrubs such as those for use in health care environments do not fall within the definition of personal protective equipment (PPE) set out in the PPE Regulation 2016/425. There are no plans to change the scope of products which fall in the definition. Scrubs are designed to promote a hygienic environment for patients and have not been manufactured to meet the essential health and safety requirements necessary for PPE. Guidance for PPE within the health and care settings can be found within the UK Infection Prevention and Control guidance which is agreed by the UK's four chief Medical and Nursing Officers and is published by Public Health England.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[168991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeframe is for the UK to begin receiving the 50 million doses of variant vaccines secured as part of the partnership with CureVac.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We expect deliveries of the vaccines from CureVac later this year, if required. This will be subject to successful clinical trials and regulatory approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

■ Courier Services: Northern Ireland**Claire Hanna:** [\[169071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of parcel delivery services in implementing new rules in line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Protocol and new rules brought into operation after the end of the transition period.

Paul Scully:

Earlier this month, the Government took several temporary operational steps to avoid disruptive cliff edges which could have affected the delivery of parcel services. These included extending the temporary arrangements that the Government set out on parcels before the end of the transition period, giving further time to parcel operators to prepare for new requirements and minimise the impact on day-to-day lives in Northern Ireland.

We remain committed to meeting our obligations in the Northern Ireland Protocol and doing so in a pragmatic and proportionate way, taking full account of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

The Government is continuing to support parcel operators and businesses across sectors to adapt to the new trading arrangements with the EU. It is also working closely with industry and counterparts in the EU to help goods move smoothly and resolve issues quickly.

■ Courier Services: Regulation**Justin Madders:** [\[166470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the scope of the Ofcom Review of Future Regulatory Framework in relation to courier companies.

Paul Scully:

Ofcom launched a call for inputs on 11 March 2021 which outlines the main themes it is considering as part of its review of postal regulation. Ofcom intends to publish a full

consultation on the future regulation of postal services later this year before concluding its review in 2022.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Social Media**

Darren Jones:

[167275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many officials in (a) his private office and (b) the wider Department have been allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

Amanda Solloway:

The Digital Communications Team has included approximately 14 members of staff responsible for producing and promoting social media content between 2018 and 2021. We cannot quantify how many other staff in the wider Communications Directorate or wider department as it's something that many people do as a smaller part of their role.

The Cabinet Office is continuously tracking and reviewing spending on cross-government campaigns, including Covid-19, to ensure our communications are efficient. We will not spend more than is needed to be effective.

The Cabinet Office publishes expenditure, including on public information campaigns, on a rolling monthly basis on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) as part of routine government transparency arrangements.

■ **Energy**

Alex Sobel:

[166540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) effect and (b) cost of energy losses in the UK when developing the Energy White Paper.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Energy White Paper sets out our long-term strategic vision to deliver an affordable, secure and reliable energy system, consistent with net zero emissions by 2050.

As we pursue this vision, we recognise the importance of managing energy losses to reduce emissions and protect consumers from unnecessary costs. We have regular discussions with Ofgem, which has the relevant regulatory powers.

■ **Energy Supply**

Alex Sobel:

[166539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with (a) Ofgem and (b) distribution network operators on (i) taking steps to tackle technical energy losses in the energy system and (ii) investing in efficient cabling to prepare the energy system for an increase in demand.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognises the importance of managing energy losses to reduce emissions and protect consumers from unnecessary costs. We have regular discussions with Ofgem, which has the relevant regulatory powers in this area.

Under the regulatory regime, distribution network operators have licence obligations to ensure that losses are as low as reasonably practicable and are incentivised to take action to reduce losses. As a result, for example, it is now standard practice for distribution network operators to 'oversize' replacement and new lower voltage cables, which reduces losses and also provides future proofing for demand increases.

Energy: Meters**Liz Saville Roberts:****[166500]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate the use of smart meters for residential solar PV installations.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

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

All smart meters are capable of recording electricity that is exported to the grid from onsite renewable generation sources, such as solar panels.

The rollout is making good progress, with 23.6 million smart and advanced meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain, as of the end of December 2020.

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

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

Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees**Matthew Pennycook:****[168990]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's consultation on Aligning UK international support for the clean energy transition which closed on 8 February 2020, when he plans to announce which option will be used for implementing the policy shift to ending new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is considering its response to the consultation and will respond in due course. This includes the Government's decision on the timing of the policy implementation.

■ Fossil Fuels: Heating

Alan Brown:

[165598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes that are off the gas grid use fossil fuel heating systems in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) England as at 8 March 2021.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Using the latest available data, we estimate that there are currently around (i) 170,000, (ii) 160,000 and (iii) 1,080,000 off gas grid households using fossil fuel as their main heating systems in Scotland, Wales and England respectively.

Sources:

(i) *Scottish house condition survey 2019* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-2019-key-findings/pages/9/>

(ii) *Estimate is derived from household estimates, which may differ from number of homes. Household estimates: mid-2019* <https://gov.wales/household-estimates-mid-2019#:~:text=Estimated%20households%20for%20Wales&text=Between%20mid%2D2018%20and%20mid,Wales%2C%20based%20on%20these%20estimates.> , *Welsh Housing Conditions Survey (energy efficiency of dwellings): April 2017 to March 2018* <https://gov.wales/welsh-housing-conditions-survey-energy-efficiency-dwellings-april-2017-march-2018> . *Estimate includes oil and solid fuel heated households only.*

(iii) *Analysis of English Household Survey , Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018)* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>.

■ Fuel Poverty

Jon Trickett:

[166323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people were in fuel poverty, in each year from 2010 to 2021.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Fuel poverty is measured at the household level. Using the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if it is living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G and its after housing costs income minus its energy costs would be less than 60 per cent of the median after housing costs income." The number of households in fuel poverty in England between 2010 and 2019, the latest year for which statistics are available is shown in the table below:

TABLE 1 - TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN FUEL POVERTY, 2010-2019

	Year	Number of households (000's)	Proportion of fuel poor households (%)
Fuel poor	2010	4,780	22.1
	2011	4,726	21.6
	2012	4,351	19.8
	2013	4,186	18.5
	2014	3,905	17.3
	2015	3,778	16.7
	2016	3,731	16.2
	2017	3,739	16.1
	2018	3,517	15.0
	2019	3,176	13.4

Note: This is based on the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency metric, 2010-2019

Further details on trends in fuel poverty in England can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-trends-2021>.

Following the publication of the 2019 fuel poverty statistics on 4th March, projections for 2020 and 2021 are due to be published on the 29th of April this year.

■ Gyms: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[168935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that people are able to cancel their gym memberships during the period of covid-19 restrictions.

Paul Scully:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has produced guidance on rights and responsibilities when contracts such as gym memberships have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-about-cancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-consumer-contracts-cancellation-and-refunds>.

The CMA has also created a COVID-19 taskforce and set up an online form to enable consumers to report any business they believe is behaving unfairly during the pandemic. Consumers who believe they have been treated unfairly by a business should complete the online form at: <https://www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/>.

Consumers can also seek advice on their rights from the Citizen's Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133, www.citizensadvice.org.uk which offers a free service advising consumers on their rights and how to take complaints forward.

■ Horizon Europe

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[167885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding for the UK's association to Horizon Europe.

Amanda Solloway:

BEIS Ministers regularly speak to my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer on a range of issues, including R&D funding. I am pleased that the UK reached an agreement to take part in the Horizon Europe programme. Association to Horizon has been welcomed by businesses and the research community and will bring huge benefits to the UK. We have always been clear that Horizon funding complements domestic funding programmes.

At the Spending Review in November, the Government committed to investing £14.6 billion in research and development in 2021/22. Spending Review was complete before the outcome of negotiations with the EU was known. As part of our ongoing Departmental allocations process, we are continuing to work with HM Treasury on the costs of Horizon Europe.

■ Hydrogen

Alexander Stafford:

[166613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the economic benefits of green hydrogen development.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Low carbon hydrogen will be vital for meeting our legally binding commitment to achieving net zero by 2050, with potential to help decarbonise vital UK industry sectors and provide flexible deployment across heat, power and transport.

Working with industry, the UK is aiming for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. As we progress towards this ambition, we would hope to see around 1GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2025.

The UK has expertise and assets to support both electrolytic (green) and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) enabled (blue) hydrogen. Our twin track

approach to enable both routes will drive cost effective supply volumes in the 2020s in line with our 2030 ambition, whilst scaling up green hydrogen.

As outlines in my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, achieving our ambition could support up to 8,000 jobs and bring over £4bn of private investment by 2030, potentially unlocking up to 100,000 jobs and £12bn GVA by 2050 in a high hydrogen net zero scenario.

The Government is clear that in supporting the growth of a hydrogen economy, there should be a focus on maximising economic benefits for local and regional communities and the UK as a whole. The UK will work with the green hydrogen sector to seek opportunities and export UK expertise and technology into the global hydrogen economy as it grows.

Alexander Stafford:

[166628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the size of the UK's industrial base in green hydrogen.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Low carbon hydrogen will be vital for meeting our legally binding commitment to achieving net zero by 2050, with potential to help decarbonise vital UK industry sectors and provide flexible deployment across heat, power and transport.

Working with industry, the UK is aiming for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. As we progress towards this ambition, we would hope to see around 1GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2025.

The UK has expertise, innovation and natural assets to support both electrolytic (green) and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) blue hydrogen. Our twin track approach to enable both routes will drive cost effective supply volumes in the 2020s in line with our 2030 5GW ambition, whilst scaling up green hydrogen.

The UK has the makings of a world leading hydrogen sector, enabling us to create strong domestic supply chains with jobs and growth expected across our industrial heartlands and beyond. We are working with industry to further understand these strengths and opportunities, including a focus on green hydrogen.

■ Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund

Lucy Powell:

[168940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been allocated to (a) each organisation and (b) in total through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to date; and how much match funding from industry that fund has generated.

Amanda Solloway:

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) is a mission-oriented funding programme. It brings together the UK's world-leading research base with highly innovative businesses to solve the major industrial and societal challenges. Since its

inception in 2017, the ISCF has allocated £2.8 billion of public funding and has garnered £2.8 billion in co-investment commitments from industry.

The ISCF has funded 1,926 unique organisations to date, together these have been awarded grants through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) with a total value of £1,811 million.

■ Insolvency

Tim Farron:

[166362]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses failed in each month of the 2007-08 financial crisis.

Paul Scully:

Monthly data on business closures during the 2007-2008 financial crisis are not available.

Data on total annual business closures have been provided in the table below, showing annual numbers of business closures between 2006 and 2010.

Table: Annual number of business closures, 2006 to 2010, all registered businesses

YEAR	NUMBER OF BUSINESS CLOSURES
2006	207,000
2007	224,000
2008	223,000
2009	277,000
2010	250,000

Source: [Office for National Statistics 'Business Demography, UK: 2011'](#)

Tim Farron:

[166363]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of businesses which have failed in each month since April 2020.

Paul Scully:

Monthly data on business closures since April 2020 are not available.

Quarterly data on business closures since April 2020 can be provided.

The table below contains this information, along with numbers of business closures in each quarter of 2019 and quarter 1 2020 for reference.

Table: Quarterly UK business closures, 2019 to 2020, all registered businesses

QUARTER AND YEAR	NUMBER OF BUSINESS CLOSURES
Q1 2019	85,260
Q2 2019	101,505
Q3 2019	83,145
Q4 2019	77,815
Q1 2020	120,235
Q2 2020	93,055
Q3 2020	76,265
Q4 2020	106,400

[Source: Office for National Statistics 'Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK'](#)

■ Insolvency: Coronavirus

Anneliese Dodds:

[167297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the temporary suspension of wrongful trading measures beyond April 2021 in order to align with other business support schemes extended beyond that date during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

Suspension of liability for wrongful trading is one of a package of regulatory easements introduced by the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020, which expire at the end of March or April.

The further extension of all of these easements is under active consideration by the Government, and an announcement will be made shortly.

■ Investment Security Unit

Dr Julian Lewis:

[168810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March 2021 to Question 164331 on parliamentary scrutiny of the new Investment Security Unit, under what provisions the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee could have oversight of that part of the work of the Unit which will involve (a) interaction with the Intelligence and Security Agencies and (b) consideration of highly classified material not normally made available to parliamentary Select Committees; and what the Government's policy is on effective parliamentary scrutiny of activities of the Unit involving material classified at the level of Top Secret.

Paul Scully:

The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Select Committee is well-placed to have oversight of the Investment Security Unit. The Committee already provides scrutiny on a number of sensitive areas, such as the civil nuclear programme, and it is well placed to consider how effectively and efficiently the Investment Security Unit is interacting with the business community and investors in delivering the National Security and Investment regime.

■ Overseas Companies**Gareth Thomas:****[166305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of UK businesses which have relocated to outside of UK territory since (a) 23 June 2016, (b) 31 January 2020 and (c) 1 January 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Department works closely alongside other Government Departments such as HM Treasury to monitor economic metrics like Foreign Direct Investment, however these statistics do not provide a comprehensive assessment of where a business has chosen to set up a site outside UK territory as opposed to instances where businesses have chosen to fully relocate.

Internationally, the UK will operate an independent trade policy for the first time in 50 years. Our focus now is on making sure that any business that is still facing challenges gets the support they need to trade effectively with the EU, and that all businesses benefit from the new free trade agreements we are striking around the world.

■ Renewable Energy: Heating**Alan Brown:****[165599]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many heat pumps have been installed in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) England in each year since 2010.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not publish the total number of heat pumps as not all are supported by government funding. The Department does publish estimates of heat generated by heat pumps which can be found via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904827/DUKES_6.6.xls.

Alan Brown:**[165600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many heat pumps have been installed in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) England with support from the Renewable Heat Incentive in each year since 2014.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The number of heat pumps that have been installed with the support of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) (i.e., accredited applications to the scheme), are shown in the tables below split by domestic and non-domestic applications. Further data is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/renewable-heat-incentive-statistics>.

DOMESTIC RHI SUPPORTED HEAT PUMPS

Year	England		Wales		Scotland		Total accreditations	
	Air source heat pump	Ground source heat pump	Air source heat pump	Ground source heat pump	Air source heat pump	Ground source heat pump	Air source heat pump	Ground source heat pump
2014	4,824	1,934	374	206	700	361	5,898	2,501
2015	8,101	2,798	453	282	3,029	382	11,583	3,462
2016	3,669	913	191	139	1,017	161	4,877	1,213
2017	4,162	867	312	130	803	165	5,277	1,162
2018	3,918	689	274	86	928	118	5,120	893
2019	7,278	903	453	106	1,612	178	9,343	1,187
2020	7,251	849	562	137	1,787	154	9,600	1,140
2021	572	63	72	19	157	11	801	93
Total	39,775	9,016	2,691	1,105	10,033	1,530	52,499	11,651

Source: data underlying the RHI deployment statistics,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/renewable-heat-incentive-statistics>

NON-DOMESTIC RHI SUPPORTED HEAT PUMPS

	England		Wales		Scotland		Total accreditations	
	Air source heat pump	Ground or water source heat pumps	Air source heat pump	Ground or water source heat pumps	Air source heat pump	Ground or water source heat pumps	Air source heat pump	Ground or water source heat pumps
2011	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
2012	0	27	0	3	0	6	0	36
2013	0	52	0	4	0	6	0	62
2014	2	74	0	10	0	9	2	93
2015	107	182	3	13	3	18	113	213
2016	96	262	6	17	29	18	131	297
2017	103	111	10	7	6	13	119	131
2018	82	147	2	12	15	14	99	173
2019	54	218	9	9	15	15	78	242
2020	112	374	13	15	10	81	135	470
2021	3	25	0	2	0	13	3	40
Total	559	1,474	43	92	78	193	680	1,759

Source: data underlying the RHI deployment statistics,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/renewable-heat-incentive-statistics>

■ Research: Career Development

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[167886]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support the post-pandemic career development of early career researchers.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government invests in research talent through PhDs and fellowship schemes. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is the single biggest funder of PhDs in the UK and currently funds between six and seven thousand PhDs per year (around 53% in STEM) through its studentships and training grants, including Centres for Doctoral Training and Doctoral Training Partnerships.

Multi-year fellowship schemes funded by BEIS are delivered both by the National Academies and UKRI and are targeted at different career stages, from early career researchers to research professors and chairs. These schemes support the development and progression of a broad spectrum of researchers and their teams while supporting their excellent research.

The Department is currently working with UKRI on the development of an R&D People and Culture Strategy as one of my top priorities. The R&D People and Culture Strategy will look to ensure the UK has the people we need at all levels, working in a culture that gets the best out of everyone and delivers the best outcomes for the country. A key part of this will be ensuring the R&D workforce has the capacity and capability to deliver the government's ambitions for R&D with enough people with the right skills across disciplines, and throughout career stages and job roles.

■ Research: Finance**Chi Onwurah:**[\[166412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the absence of an announcement on government-funded research and development allocations for 2021-22 on universities and other research institutions planning their spending for that financial year; and whether he plans on making that announcement before the beginning of the 2021-22 financial year.

Chi Onwurah:[\[166414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government plans to make funding allocations to universities and other research institutions to allow those institutions to plan support for post-doctoral research students.

Amanda Solloway:

Research and development (R&D) are central to igniting the UK's economic recovery, creating new jobs, boosting productivity, and improving people's quality of life. New technologies will bring more productive, higher paid jobs to the whole economy.

We are increasing investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22. This investment will put research and development at the heart of economic and social recovery from the impacts of COVID-19, enabling us to build back better for a greener, healthier and more resilient UK.

We are working closely with all our delivery partners to understand the impact of the settlement on universities and other research institutions. We are also engaging with our partners to develop the 2021/22 allocations and help them plan implementation.

We aim to update our partners on 2021/22 funding as soon as possible.

Mr Clive Betts:

[167832]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of demand on the UK Research and Innovation budget.

Amanda Solloway:

In contrast to the number of open calls that UKRI runs, which remained relatively stable with an additional surge to deliver specific COVID-19 related funding, the number of applications for funding from UKRI has risen over the last year, including in response to COVID-19. To date the trend has already shown an increase of over 1,000 applications ending December 2020, with a further projection of another 2,000 applications to be received in the final quarter. These increases are against an active portfolio of approximately 14,000 grants.

UKRI has also responded to increased demand to help stabilise the system and the pressures felt across the research and innovation community. Active grants continue to attract a high number of requested changes through their life, but more recently hundreds more enquiries have resulted from COVID-19 disruption, generating many requests for both costed and no cost extensions with £90 million in costed grant extensions paid this year.

Other stabilising interventions that UKRI has made in response to the pandemic include bringing forwards £100 million of Quality Related funding from Academic Year 2020-21 to AY 2019-20, and providing additional funding through the Sustaining University Research Expertise (SURE) Fund in financial year 2020-21.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[167887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of demand on the UK Research and Innovation budget.

Amanda Solloway:

In contrast to the number of open calls that UKRI runs, which remained relatively stable with an additional surge to deliver specific COVID-19 related funding, the number of applications for funding from UKRI has risen over the last year, including in response to COVID-19. To date the trend has already shown an increase of over 1,000 applications ending December 2020, with a further projection of another 2,000 applications to be received in the final quarter. These increases are against an active portfolio of approximately 14,000 grants.

UKRI has also responded to increased demand to help stabilise the system and the pressures felt across the research and innovation community. Active grants continue

to attract a high number of requested changes through their life, but more recently hundreds more enquiries have resulted from COVID-19 disruption, generating many requests for both costed and no cost extensions with £90 million in costed grant extensions paid this year.

Other stabilising interventions that UKRI has made in response to the pandemic include bringing forwards £100 million of Quality Related funding from Academic Year 2020-21 to AY 2019-20, and providing additional funding through the Sustaining University Research Expertise (SURE) Fund in financial year 2020-21.

■ Research: Overseas Aid

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[167888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on the maintenance of the science and research funding in the international aid budget.

Amanda Solloway:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary ran a cross-government process with Departments to review in detail how ODA is allocated between key priorities. The Foreign Secretary announced an ODA settlement of £706 million for my Department on Tuesday 26th January.

Though the impact of the COVID pandemic has impacted ODA budgets, international collaboration remains central to a healthy and productive R&D sector. The Government's commitment to research and innovation has been clearly demonstrated, given we are increasing investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22, and as set out in our Integrated Review ambition.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[167930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an estimate of the potential number of job losses (a) in the UK and (b) overseas as a result of the reduced Official Development Assistance allocations to UK Research and Innovation.

Amanda Solloway:

The challenging financial situation we face due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary reduction in the UK's aid spending target from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. This means making difficult decisions when it comes to prioritising how we spend aid money to deliver the most impactful outcomes.

BEIS is working with its ODA Delivery Partners, including UKRI, to manage the implementation of the 21/22 ODA settlement.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Census: Telephone Services**

Alex Sobel: [\[166536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many requests the census 2021 helpline has had for paper forms since it opened in 2021.

Alex Sobel: [\[166537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many calls have been unanswered by the Census 2021 helpline since it opened in 2021.

Alex Sobel: [\[166538\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether people without internet access who have been unable to reach the census 2021 helpline as a result of reported waiting times will receive a fine for not submitting a census form by the given deadline.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSAs response to PQ166536, 166537 , 166538 [FINAL 2- UKSA's response to PQ166536_166537_166538 (1).pdf]

■ Civil Servants: South East

Bridget Phillipson: [\[167858\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Treasury's publication entitled Build Back Better: our plan for growth, dated March 2021, and the target set out on page 14 of that publication to relocate 22,000 civil servants out of London by 2030, whether that target is to relocate those civil servants out of (a) London or (b) London and the South East; and if he will confirm the exact boundaries of the areas he would denote by the terms (i) London, (ii) the South East and (iii) London and the South East.

Julia Lopez:

At Budget 2020, the Government committed to relocating a minimum of 22,000 civil service roles out of central London, the vast majority to the other regions and nations of the UK.

■ Coronavirus: Death

Kirsten Oswald: [\[167227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the proportion of people who died from covid-19 who were (a) disabled and (b) not disabled.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSAs response to PQ167227 [UKSA's final response to PQ167227.pdf]

■ Elections: Disinformation**Chi Onwurah:**[\[168914\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Digital and Culture of 9 March 2021, Official Report, column 116WH, what role the Electoral Commission will have in tackling electoral disinformation.

Chloe Smith:

The role of the Electoral Commission is to ensure that elections and referendums are run effectively and in accordance with the law, to register political parties, and to regulate donations and loans to political parties and other campaigners and their spending. The Commission has recently launched a public awareness campaign about online political advertising.

The Government is committed to introducing a digital imprints regime. It will inform voters about the source of digital campaign material. The Electoral Commission will play a central role in ensuring compliance with the regime. This will be a big step forward in making UK politics more transparent and will empower voters to make informed decisions.

Tackling disinformation in all its forms remains a key priority for the Government. As set out in the Full Government Response, the Online Safety Bill will introduce a duty of care requiring companies to address harms on their online platforms, such as misinformation and disinformation. The new laws will have robust and proportionate measures to deal with misinformation and disinformation that could cause significant physical or psychological harm to an individual. Ofcom will be the independent online harms regulator and the Bill will give Ofcom the tools it needs to understand how effectively disinformation is being addressed so that it can take action as required.

■ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**Justin Madders:**[\[168957\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average waiting time is for a complaint to be assigned to a Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman caseworker in the most recent period for which that information is available; and what that average waiting time was in March 2020.

Justin Madders:[\[168958\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average waiting time is from (a) a complaint being accepted for investigation and (b) a

decision being made by the Parliamentary Ombudsman in the most recent period for which that information is available.

Justin Madders:

[\[168959\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the performance of the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

Chloe Smith:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) is independent of Government and is accountable to Parliament through the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee for its performance. The PHSO will therefore reply separately to these questions by letter.

■ **Voting Rights: British Nationals Abroad**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[168852\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress the Government has made on ensuring that UK citizens living overseas retain the right to vote in UK general elections; and if he will make a statement.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Honourable Gentleman to my answer to [PQ133213](#), published on 11 January 2021.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Coronavirus**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[168853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to ensure that members of the armed services returning from duty overseas are not asked to pay for covid-19 tests.

James Heappey:

I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for raising the question. I am looking into this as a matter of urgency and will write to her in due course.

■ **Armed Forces: Pay**

John Healey:

[\[168831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average median pay for armed forces personnel will be in 2021-22.

John Healey:

[\[168832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the pay freeze on the household income of armed forces personnel in 2021-22.

John Healey:[\[168833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what comparative assessment he has made of the armed forces pay increase and the projected rate of inflation in 2021-22.

Johnny Mercer:

In November 2020 my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out, as part of the 2020 Spending Review, the rationale behind a public sector pay pause this year. As outlined in the Secretary of State for Defence's recent letter to the Chair of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body, covering Pay Round 2021/22, and as detailed in HM Treasury's earlier Economic Evidence to the Pay Review Bodies 2020/21, the pay pause recognises that public sector pay has been shielded from the pandemic's economic effects. It also serves to protect public sector jobs at this time of crisis whilst ensuring fairness between the public and private sectors. As such, no consideration has been given to the effect of a pay pause on average median pay; the household income of Service personnel; or a comparison with projected rates of inflation.

John Healey:[\[168834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the ratio of pay between an officer and a non-officer was in each year since 2010.

Johnny Mercer:

The requested information can be found in the table below:

Ratio of median annual salary (average Officer salary relative to average Other Ranks salary) in each year since 2010:

DATE	OTHER RANKS (OR) TO OFFICER (OF) PAY RATIO (OR : OF)
01/04/2010	1:1.77
01/04/2011	1:1.77
01/04/2012	1:1.77
01/04/2013	1:1.77
01/04/2014	1:1.79
01/04/2015	1:1.77
01/04/2016	1:1.77
01/04/2017	1:1.73
01/04/2018	1:1.70
01/04/2019	1:1.66

DATE	OTHER RANKS (OR) TO OFFICER (OF) PAY RATIO (OR : OF)
01/04/2020	1:1.70

Notes:

1. The median average (mid-point of the distribution of personnel within the rank) salaries provided in this response are calculated from the annual salaries for all Regular Officers and Other Ranks as at 1-April each year. This means that the averages are based on salary at that point in the year, not what each Service person will have been paid in total across the year, which may differ, for example due to pay rate changes and promotions. Where there was a promotion within the month of March, the new rank's rate of pay was used in the calculation.
2. Median salaries are measured as at 1 April within the financial year. Changes in the medians can therefore reflect both changes in pay rates and changes in the relative distribution of personnel within the rank.
3. The year-on-year change in average pay should not be interpreted as the growth in pay that an average service person will have experienced. The data purely reflects the change in the median salary over time and it would be unrealistic to assume that an individual's pay would follow this path. Many Service personnel also benefit from an annual increment in addition to any rise recommended by the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body and, for senior officers, the Senior Salaries Review Body
4. The pay structure changed significantly with the introduction of Pay 16 which accounts for the large change in ratio in 2017. A simple comparison of medians between years is not possible.
5. This data uses a different method for calculating the average than the Military Salaries Index (MSI) published in the Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics and are the actual average annual salaries as at April each year.

■ **Armed Forces: Pets**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[166526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of introducing financial support for military families wishing to transport their pets to and from countries where those families are deployed.

Johnny Mercer:

There are no criteria within the Local Overseas Allowance that acknowledge pets, as the provision is based on average living costs in the UK, which does not include pets. Additionally, there is no allowance or entitlement for domestic pets to use Ministry of Defence transport. Only official Service animals (police and military working dogs) and non-military working dogs (search and rescue), or assistance dogs (guide or

listening dogs), may be conveyed at public expense. As such, pets are considered the personal choice and responsibility of Service personnel and their families.

■ Ministry of Defence: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[167286]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many officials in (a) his private office and (b) the wider Department have been allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Please find below the information requested:

- a) SofS private office – 0
- b) Wider Departmental figures are as follows:

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFICIALS IN THE WIDER DEPARTMENT ALLOCATED TO THE PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION OF ONLINE CONTENT FOR USE ON SOCIAL MEDIA
2018 – 2019	37
2019 – 2020	37
2020 – 2021	37

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadband and 5G: Wakefield

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[167356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Wakefield benefits from the rollout of (a) superfast broadband and (b) 5G.

Matt Warman:

Since its inception in 2012, the Superfast Broadband programme has delivered superfast broadband coverage to 5.3 million premises, which constitutes 17% of all households in the UK. As part of this programme, to date, superfast coverage has been provided to c12,000 premises within the Wakefield District.

According to Thinkbroadband (<http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E14001009>), superfast broadband speeds in the Wakefield constituency are above the national average with superfast connectivity (≥ 30 Mbps) of 98%. The UK average is 96.7%, and the average in England is 97.2%.

We are, however, not resting on our laurels and have a project running in partnership with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to utilise the latest Fixed Wireless technology to further deliver superfast broadband connectivity across the West Yorkshire region, including an additional 1,000 premises in the Wakefield district.

The government is committed to providing world-class digital infrastructure, and our ambition is for the majority of the population to have access to 5G by 2027.

Approximately 3,000 mobile base stations now provide 5G services across the UK, and it is available in 200 towns and cities including Wakefield.

■ **Broadband: Carmarthenshire**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[168877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Broadband Upgrade Fund in Carmarthenshire.

Matt Warman:

The Broadband Upgrade Fund Pilot provided an opportunity to test an innovative approach to demand stimulation in the broadband market. The final stage of the Broadband Upgrade Fund only recently completed, in January 2021, and many suppliers are still in the process of engaging with communities to put together project proposals to submit to BDUK for approval. Therefore, a full assessment of the effectiveness of the Broadband Upgrade Fund Pilot will be undertaken once there has been sufficient opportunity for proposals to turn into gigabit capable connections.

However, an initial assessment shows that communities in Carmarthenshire were particularly active, with over 3,200 residents and small to medium sized businesses registering their interest in the Broadband Upgrade Fund. Suppliers were also equally responsive to the demand identified in Carmarthenshire. Around 98% of businesses and residents who registered for the pilot received at least one offer from a broadband supplier, with 96% receiving two or more offers.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus**

Sarah Atherton:

[\[913604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support charities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Matt Warman:

The Government has provided a multi-billion-pound package of Covid-19 support which charities and civil society organisations have been able to access to help them continue their vital work.

Charities are benefiting from the extension of unprecedented cross-economy support including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans and £4.6 billion in lockdown grants for closed premises.

In addition, charities, social enterprises and other voluntary sector organisations have received a £750 million targeted support package and £150 million unlocked from dormant bank and building society accounts.

■ **Cricket: Racial Discrimination**

Claudia Webbe: [\[167362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Racial Equality in Cricket Report, published in 1997, what assessment he has made of the England and Wales Cricket Board's progress on the implementation of the recommendations in that report.

Claudia Webbe: [\[167363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the England and Wales Cricket Board on the (a) number of grievances raised against that Board on the grounds of (i) racial discrimination and (ii) victimisation since 2010 and (b) the number of those grievances in that period that were (A) upheld and (B) dismissed.

Claudia Webbe: [\[167364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) African Caribbean and (b) Asian umpires have applied to be part of the England and Wales Cricket Board panel in the last 29 years; how many such applications were rejected; and on what basis those applications were rejected.

Claudia Webbe: [\[167365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much of the £60 million Sport England budget allocated to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) between 2009 and 2017 has been spent on achieving equality and diversity on that board; and if his Department will undertake a cost benefit analysis of the money spent to date.

Claudia Webbe: [\[167366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps Sport England takes to ensure that funding provided to the England and Wales Cricket Board achieves sustainable diversity at all levels.

Claudia Webbe: [\[167367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the (a) ethnic and (b) gender breakdown is of the (i) management and (ii) staff of the England and Wales Cricket Board at all levels.

Claudia Webbe: [\[167368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what bullying, harassment and anti discrimination policies apply to members of the (a) England and Wales Cricket Board, (b) County Cricket Boards and (c) County and regional

management; how many allegations concerning that policy have been made against members of those boards in the last five years; and how many of those allegations have been (i) upheld and (ii) rejected.

Claudia Webbe:

[167369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of (a) unconscious bias and (b) anti-racism training for decision makers of the England and Wales Cricket Board and its delegated authority to its regional bodies.

Claudia Webbe:

[167370]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) African, (b) Caribbean and (c) Asian (i) players, (ii) umpires, (iii) coaches (iv) and staff are protected when alleging (A) race discrimination, (B) ball tampering and (C) any other form of unlawful behaviour within the game.

Claudia Webbe:

[167371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish an annual report on the progress being made to achieve diversity and equality targets within cricket at all levels.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is clear that racism has no place in cricket, sport, or society at large. Our sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future' has diversity and inclusion at its heart. In addition, Sport England's new ten year strategy, "Uniting the Movement", reinforces their commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion in grassroots sport and physical activity. However, it is ultimately for the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), as for all individual sports' national governing bodies, to decide on the specific aims and appropriate initiatives to increase diversity in their organisations, and to evaluate progress with these.

We welcome the steps taken by the ECB in recent years to increase diversity in cricket, including the recent establishment of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket, chaired by Cindy Butts. This body looks to examine all issues relating to race and equity in cricket. The evaluation will play an important role in ensuring inclusivity, and that cricket is a game for everyone.

Since 2009, Sport England funding has directly contributed to a number of cricket participation projects with an equality, diversity and inclusion focus run by the ECB. This is in addition to the requirements around diversity set out in the UK Sport and Sport England Code for Sports Governance since 2017.

One example of the ECB's work on diversity, funded by Sport England, is the South Asian Action Plan. This focuses on increasing racial diversity and opening up access to cricket, including facilities and delivery of bespoke formats of the sport for the community's needs. After the success of the first investment of £1 million, this has recently been awarded an additional £1 million for the next 2 years.

There is still more to do, however, and we will continue to liaise with the ECB ensure this issue is tackled effectively and that recommendations from the commission are implemented.

■ Culture Recovery Fund: Events Industry

Stephen Timms:

[\[168817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has plans to support live event supply chain businesses from the unallocated balance of the Culture Recovery Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

Of the £1.57bn Culture recovery Fund announced in July, £400m was held back as a contingency which forms the basis of the second round of grant (£300m) and repayable finance (£100m) funding. Applications are currently being assessed and allocations will be made by the end of the Financial Year.

The Government recognises the severe impact the pandemic has had on supply chain businesses for the events sector and their critical role in the cultural ecosystem. Supply chain organisations were eligible for the first and second rounds of Culture Recovery Funding, and many organisations were successful in the first round. Production Park in Wakefield, for instance, is receiving a £12m loan, whilst Adlib Audio in Knowsley is receiving a grant of £1,650,356. The government's commitment to the sector has been further evidenced by the announcement at Budget of an additional £300m for the Culture Recovery Fund. Details will be announced in due course.

We will continue to engage with the sector through the ministerially chaired Events and Entertainment Working Group which include the Production Services Association, to better understand the issues facing the sector ensure live event supply chain businesses are supported.

■ Digital Technology: Disability

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[166491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the prevalence of digital exclusion among disabled people.

Caroline Dinenage:

There are several sources that the government uses to understand the prevalence of digital exclusion among disabled people. Ofcom survey data from 2020 suggests that 23% of those with any limitations/impairments don't use the internet or have home internet access. The ONS publication 'Exploring the UK's Digital Divide' 2019 states that in 2017, 56% of adult internet non-users were disabled. The 2020 Lloyds Consumer Digital Index tells us that people with an impairment are 25% less likely to have the skills to access devices and get online by themselves.

■ Digital Technology: Disadvantaged

Matt Western:

[\[913608\]](#)

What steps he is taking to tackle the digital divide.

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[913615\]](#)

What steps he is taking to tackle the digital divide.

Caroline Dineneage:

To tackle the digital divide and support connectivity we have worked with providers on social tariffs meaning low cost landline and broadband services for those on means-tested benefits.

DCMS has also launched the Digital Lifeline fund to provide devices, data and support to 5000 adults with learning disabilities. In addition, to boost skills, we have made digital qualifications to level 1 for adults free of charge.

■ Entertainers: EU Countries

Ruth Jones:

[\[166563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of work-permit free travel for musicians and performers to and from the EU on the UK's creative industries.

Ruth Jones:

[\[166565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the devolved administrations on the effect on the UK's creative industries of the removal of work-permit free travel for musicians and performers to and from the EU.

Caroline Dineneage:

This Government recognises the importance of touring for UK musicians, performers, other cultural and creative practitioners, and their support staff.

Leaving the EU has always meant that there would be changes to how touring musicians and performers operate in the EU. UK performers and artists are of course still able to tour and perform in the EU, and vice versa. However, they will be required to check domestic immigration rules for each Member State in which they intend to tour.

We understand the concerns about the new arrangements and we are committed to supporting the sectors as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes. The DCMS-led Working Group on Creative and Cultural Touring brings together sector representatives, other key government departments, and representatives from each of the devolved administrations. The Group is working together to provide clarity regarding the practical steps that need to be taken by touring professionals when touring the EU, and it will explore how these sectors can be supported to work and tour in the EU with confidence when it is safe to do so.

We know that while leaving the EU will bring changes and new processes to touring and working in the EU, it will also bring new opportunities. In all circumstances, we expect our creative industries to continue to be as highly valued in the European Union as they are across the world.

■ **Events Industry: Coronavirus**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[166479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the effect on Gross Value Added in the event that festivals and other mass participation events cannot take place in summer 2021 due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

We appreciate the important role that the festival sector plays in the UK's economy, and that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to this sector. We have been working closely with the festival sector to understand the challenges it faces and to keep the situation under review.

The festival sector has estimated the total GVA for festivals to the UK economy is £1.76bn. The industry has also estimated that widespread cancellation of festivals in the summer could lead to a drop in GVA of £1bn (between June and August 2021).

Thangam Debbonaire:

[166481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will provide sector-specific support to (a) events and festivals and (b) companies in the events supply chain where covid-19 restrictions and guidance remain in force.

Caroline Dinenage:

We are aware that COVID-19 and related restrictions have severely impacted these sectors and their supply chains. We continue to engage with stakeholders through the Tourism Industry Council, the Festival and Outdoor Events Working Group and the Venues Steering Group. These groups include representatives from leading sector organisations and other experts to develop action plans for how we can best support the sector's safe reopening. Pilots will run as part of the Events Research Programme to examine how such events can take place without the need for social distancing using other mitigations such as testing.

The live events and festival sectors have been eligible to access Government COVID-19 support. This includes various government-backed loans, business grants, reduction in VAT and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes. The recently announced discretionary Local Restrictions Support Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant provides local authorities with funds to support businesses that meet the eligibility criteria. On 5th January the Chancellor announced one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring.

These sectors have also benefited from the Cultural Recovery Fund (CRF). Over £1 billion worth of funding has now been allocated across the UK, including over £800 million to almost 3800 arts, culture and heritage organisations and sites in England. Supply chain organisations were eligible for the CRF. They are recognised as a critical part of the sector. An additional £300 million was announced at Budget on 3 March for the CRF.

Stephen Timms:

[168818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to encourage local authorities to provide financial support to live event supply chain businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support for businesses that are required to close, or which are severely affected by the restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives. Supply chain organisations are recognised as a critical part of our sectors and were eligible to apply for the Culture Recovery Fund.

The discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) forms part of a wider package of support for businesses that have been mandated to close and also had their trade adversely affected by the Covid-19 Restrictions. The guidance for ARG funding encourages Local Authorities to develop discretionary grant schemes to help those businesses which - while not legally forced to close - are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of Covid-19.

This could include - for example - businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, or businesses in the events sector. The guidance specifically refers to the live events sector.

It is up to each local authority to determine eligibility for the ARG based on their assessment of local economic need; however, we encourage local authorities to support businesses which have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, but which are ineligible for the other grant schemes.

Stephen Timms:

[168819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussion he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on support for people working in the live event supply chain with previous operating profits of over £50,000 per year who are excluded from the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government recognises the significant challenge the current pandemic poses to the arts and creative sectors and to the many businesses, individuals and freelancers working across these industries. We are working very hard to help freelancers in those sectors access support, including through the Self Employment Income Support Scheme and funding from Arts Council England.

Live Event Supply chain organisations have benefitted from economy-wide support that the Government has provided, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

The Government has announced that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and fifth grant. Individuals will be able to qualify for the new grants based on their 2019-20 tax returns. This means that over 600,000 self-employed individuals may be newly eligible for the SEISS, including many new to self-employment in 2019-20.

■ **Events Industry: Insurance**

Justin Madders:

[\[167252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing Government-backed covid-19 cancellation Insurance for the live events sector.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Government is aware of the concerns which have been raised about the challenge of securing indemnity cover for live events. My officials continue to work closely with the affected sectors to understand all barriers to reopening, including potential challenges around indemnity cover.

Understandably, the bar for considering Government intervention is set extremely high, especially in light of recent announcements including the extension to the furlough scheme and local business support. My officials are continuing to collect evidence of all of the barriers live events are facing to reopening, including access to indemnity insurance through the market.

We are keeping the situation under review and working closely with HMT on this issue to determine the appropriate and most effective response for the sector within the public health context.

■ **Fairgrounds: Coronavirus**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[167958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to guidance, Covid-19 Response - Spring 2021, at what stage the Government plans that travelling showpeople will be able to proceed with (a) fairground rides and (b) other services at (i) events and (ii) festivals.

Nigel Huddleston:

Outdoor funfairs and fairgrounds operated by travelling showpeople can reopen in Step 2 - no earlier than 12 April. These events will be subject to local authority approval. The rules on social contact outdoors will apply in these settings. For Step 2, this means groups must be limited to up to 6 people or 2 households.

Outdoor funfairs and fairgrounds will also need to be organised by a business, charity or similar organisation; comply with COVID-Secure guidance with reasonable steps

to limit the risk of transmission and the completion of a risk assessment; and ensure that those attending do not mix beyond what is permitted by the social contact limits (unless another exemption exists, such as for work purposes, or supervised activities for children).

Remaining outdoor entertainment, such as outdoor theatres, cinemas (except drive-in) and circuses, will reopen in Step 3 - no earlier than 17 May, and at least five weeks after Step 2, following a further review of the data and the four tests.

■ **Football Index**

Patricia Gibson:

[168967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking in response to the suspension of Football Index's licence; what assessment he has made of the adequacy of regulation of the gambling industry in relation to Football Index; and what protection is available to people who have funds deposited with that company.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government recognises the concerns of Football Index customers and is monitoring the situation closely. The Gambling Commission has suspended the operator's licence while it carries out an investigation and has made clear it expects the operator to focus on treating customers fairly. Further information is available at: <http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/News/information-notice-suspension-of-licence-betindex-limited>

■ **Gaming: Coronavirus**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[158944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason the Government's policy is that adult gaming centres are unable to open on 12 April 2021; and what the evidential basis is for that policy.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[159320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 February 2021 to Question 155057, on Gaming: Coronavirus, for what reason licensed betting offices with gaming machines are a greater social and economic priority than adult gaming centres with those machines.

Alex Sobel:

[161854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to his Answer of 26 February 2021 to Question 153362, if he will make an assessment of the relative economic effect of re-opening (a) Adult Gaming Centres in Step 3 and (b) Licensed Betting Offices in Step 2 of the covid-19 roadmap.

Alex Sobel:[\[161855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2021 to Question 153362, whether an assessment was made of the potential effect on competition in the high street gaming sector as a result of opening Licensed Betting Offices in Step 2 and Adult Gaming Centres in Step 3 of the covid-19 roadmap.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[163651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what comparative assessment he has made of the potential risks of reopening high street adult gaming centres and (a) retail venues and (b) licensed betting offices.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government has designed the roadmap for reopening premises following careful consideration of the evidence and scientific advice. The roadmap strikes a balance between mitigating the social, health and economic impacts of closures and the need to avoid a resurgence of COVID-19 infections. It also takes account of the cumulative impact of easing restrictions and the need to assess the impact at each step. Under the current roadmap, all non-essential retail will open at Step 2, not before 12 April. Indoor entertainment and indoor leisure will open at Step 3, not before 17 May.

As the business of Adult Gaming Centres consists entirely of customers playing machines within the premises, they are considered to be entertainment and will open at Step 3. The customers of Licensed Betting Offices (LBOs) may enter the premises, place a bet and leave with a betting slip, a transaction more similar to purchasing goods in a shop. While LBOs will be permitted to open at Step 2, they will be subject to a number of additional restrictions as set out in the previous Tier 3 guidance. These include showing no live sport or racing and having no chairs, as well as early closure. Under normal circumstances LBOs are limited to offering a maximum of four gaming machines and only two may be made available under these restrictions.

In recognition of the impact of requiring some businesses to remain closed for a longer period, the Chancellor announced an enhanced package of support at the Budget, including Restart Grants of up to £18,000 per premises, specifically for those which must remain closed beyond Step 2.

■ Hospitality Industry and Leisure: Coronavirus

John Spellar:[\[913619\]](#)

What steps he is taking to support the reopening of sport, hospitality and leisure venues during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

In the last twelve months, billions in funding has been provided to support the hospitality and arts, entertainment and recreation sectors through a combination of grants, loans, and business rate relief. The Culture Recovery Fund and Sports Recovery packages have provided close to £2.5 billion in sector specific support.

The Events Research programme, starting in April, comprises a series of scientific pilots conducted across a range of settings to explore how reopening can be facilitated safely.

■ **Internet: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna:

[\[169073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with (a) Ofcom and (b) web hosting and registrar companies to ensure that Northern Irish businesses are able to maintain EU website domains.

Caroline Dinenage:

The .eu domain is controlled by EURid, the registry manager appointed by the European Commission. Following the end of the transition period, many UK businesses are no longer eligible to hold, register or renew a .eu domain name.

Officials in my Department have carried out extensive engagement with the relevant businesses and trade associations to inform UK holders of .eu domains of this change before the end of this period. We have also engaged with the devolved administrations, including the Northern Ireland Civil Service on this issue.

■ **National League: Coronavirus**

Jon Trickett:

[\[166326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish all meeting minutes from all meetings between his Department and the National League, in relation to funding support for National League football clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

I am content to share copies of all my written correspondence with the National League with the Hon Member's office which detail my discussions with them on this issue.

On 19 November 2020 I gave a statement to the House on the principles of the Sports Winter Survival Package, which was open to National League clubs.

■ **Nuisance Calls**

Darren Jones:

[\[164590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to help prevent aggressive cold calling of land owners by prospective buyers who contact landowners even though their land is not advertised for sale.

Mr John Whittingdale:

HM Land Registry, as required by statute, includes within the register of title for England and Wales, the name and contact address details for each proprietor of a registered property. This can include email addresses, if the proprietor chooses to provide one, but it does not hold telephone numbers.

For a prescribed fee, a copy of the register entries that relate to an individual registered property can be obtained. HM Land Registry does not offer free and open access to the data they hold about property ownership. It publishes its commitment to citizens' privacy rights in a Personal Information Charter, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry/about/personal-information-charter#your-legal-rights>

The Hon Member's constituents should be aware that they have a number of rights under the UK's data protection regime, including the right to object to their data being processed and the right to erasure of their data. If the contact numbers are being held by an organisation that processes personal information, that organisation must comply with the data protection principles.

If anyone is concerned about the handling of their data by any organisation, they should contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for further advice or to make a complaint. The ICO can be contacted by telephone on 0303 123 1113 or through their live chat facility: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/live-chat/>. Further contact details are on the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>.

■ Social Media: Harassment

Claudia Webbe:

[167980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if his Department will take steps with social media companies to tackle online abuse directed at supporters of the Indian farmers protests.

Caroline Dinenage:

We are taking steps through the online harms regulatory framework to ensure that online abuse is addressed. Under a new legal duty of care, companies will need to remove and limit the spread of illegal content, including illegal online abuse. All companies will need to take swift and effective action against such content.

Companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will also need to undertake regular risk assessments to identify legal but harmful material on their services. These companies will need to set clear terms and conditions which explicitly state what categories of legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently and could face enforcement action if they do not.

The new regulatory framework will require companies to address the risk of harm to users in the UK, no matter where the companies are based. The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework, will be ready this year.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Jon Trickett:

[166325]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if spectators will be permitted to attend non-elite sport from 17 May 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

As set out in the roadmap announced by the Prime Minister on Monday 22 February, spectators at some large events will return subject to capacity caps from step 3 (expected to take place no earlier than 17 May). Government is working to produce both overarching guidance for all outdoor events and guidance for different spectator environments such as non-elite sports which will be available as we progress along the roadmap.

■ UK Safer Internet Centre**Grahame Morris:**[\[168879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the UK Safer Internet Centre; and if he will ensure that the level of funding for that centre is maintained when that centre no longer receives funding from the EU.

Grahame Morris:[\[168880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to assist the UK Safer Internet Centre in securing a long-term funding settlement.

Caroline Dineneage:

The UK Safer Internet Centre plays an important role in improving online safety in the UK, particularly for children, and is a valued member of the UK Council for Internet Safety. Officials engage regularly with the Centre on its funding position following the UK's exit from the EU.

The Centre has applied for further funding from the European Commission's Connecting Europe Facility programme for the calendar year of 2021, for which the government provided a letter of support. We understand the Centre has been successful in its bid for funding but we await formal confirmation from the Centre regarding its outcome.

EDUCATION**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Wes Streeting:**[\[168979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the fund for exceptional costs associated with covid-19 for the period from March to July 2020, how many applications were (a) awarded and (b) rejected by constituency and local authority; and what the value was of those applications (i) awarded and (ii) rejected by constituency and local authority.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has provided additional funding to schools, on top of existing budgets, to cover unavoidable costs incurred between March and July 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak that could not be met from their budgets.

Schools were eligible to claim for funding for: increased premises related costs associated with keeping open over the Easter and summer half term holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who were not in school, where schools were not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements.

To date, the Department has paid schools £138 million for all claims within the published scope of the fund, across both application windows. In the first application window we offered the opportunity for schools to flag other exceptional costs not included under the agreed categories, which were subject to further assessment. Schools applied for £42 million of additional costs which were not paid. We made it clear that we could not guarantee any claims beyond the published scope of the fund would be paid. It is reasonable for taxpayers to expect that public funding is targeted towards those who most need it. Therefore, the fund was targeted towards the costs we identified as the biggest barrier to schools operating as they needed to between March and July 2020 to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

Over 15,500 schools applied for funding through the exceptional costs fund, and to date we have made more than 19,000 payments from the fund. Around 450 schools did not apply for any of the eligible categories of funding and have not received payments.

The Department will publish a full breakdown of allocations from the exceptional costs fund, by school, in due course.

■ **Breakfast Clubs: Finance**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[168981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of funding universal breakfast clubs to give every child a healthy breakfast, more time to play with their friends and extra time for teachers to provide targeted catch-up support.

Nick Gibb:

This Government wants pupils to be healthy and well nourished, and encourages pupils to adopt a healthy balanced diet and healthy life choices, through school funding, legislation and guidance.

Up to £24 million will be available to extend our support for school breakfast clubs until 2023, to make sure thousands of children in disadvantaged areas have a healthy start to the day. Further details on the invitation to tender for the delivery of the future programme can be found through the following link:

<https://education.app.jaggaer.com/web/login.html> (under 'View Opportunities').

We know that breakfast clubs can bring a wide range of benefits for children. An evaluation by the Education Endowment Foundation found that supporting schools to run a free of charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered an average of 2

months' additional progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 with moderate to low security. Breakfast club schools also saw an improvement in pupil behaviour and attendance.

The Department's guidance has been updated to make clear that providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, breakfast or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children, are able to continue to open for both outdoor and indoor provision, provided that they follow the protective measures set out by the Government in this guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Parents and carers are only able to access settings for certain essential purposes. Providers should only offer indoor and outdoor face-to-face provision to vulnerable children and young people where the provision is reasonably necessary to enable their parents and carers to work, search for work or undertake education or training; attend a medical appointment, address a medical need or attend a support group; be used by electively home educating parents as part of their arrangements for their child to receive a suitable full-time education; or be used as part of their efforts to obtain a regulated qualification, meet the entry requirements for an education institution, or to undertake exams and assessments.

The Government is committed to helping children and young people make up education lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. This is why we have invested £1.7 billion to give early years, schools and colleges support to help pupils get back on track, including additional funding for tutoring, early language support and summer schools.

We have also appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner who will advise Ministers on the approach for education recovery, with a particular focus on helping pupils catch up on lost education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Children in Care

Tulip Siddiq:

[168987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the upcoming ban on unregulated accommodation for children aged under 16, whether children in care who are settled in children's homes will be required to move out before they formally leave care at 18.

Vicky Ford:

This government firmly believes that every child in the care system deserves to live in a high-quality setting that meets their needs and keeps them safe. Anything less is unacceptable. We are clear that independent and semi-independent provision can be the right option for some older children, but it must be of high quality, and the young person must be ready for the level of independence that it promotes. As more older children are entering the care system, it is important that we ensure that there is a

high-quality option available to facilitate the development of their independence, as they prepare for adult life and for leaving care.

We are introducing national standards for independent and semi-independent settings for children in care and care leavers aged 16 and 17 to raise the bar for this provision. This will work towards ensuring that local authorities can be confident when making placements in this provision and will strengthen our ability to take action against poor providers and, most importantly, will ensure that our children and young people are safe and have the best possible chances of success in life.

These settings, however, cannot meet the needs of children under the age of 16. These children are too young to be placed in independent and semi-independent provision. They should be placed in foster care or children's homes, and that is why we are banning the practice of placing children under 16 in unregulated settings from September.

The ban on placing children under 16 in unregulated settings is in no way intended to create a default position at which children are placed in semi-independent or independent provision on their 16th birthday, as many of these young people's needs will be best met by a placement in foster carers or in children's homes. Local authorities have statutory duties to meet the needs of the children whom they look after and they should continue to place young people in settings that best meet their needs.

■ Children: Social Services

Tulip Siddiq:

[168985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Written Statement on Children's Social Care Update, Official Report, HCWS835, published 9 March 2021, if he will publish the data his Department holds on the use by local authorities of the flexibilities provided for by the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.

Vicky Ford:

In February 2021, the department undertook a public consultation to seek views on extending and amending the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.

The consultation document included the monitoring information obtained from local authorities on the use of the flexibilities. On 9 March 2021, the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 were laid and the government response to the consultation was published. The consultation document and the response can be accessed at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-adoption-and-children-coronavirus-amendment-no-2-regulations-2020>.

■ Education: UK Trade with EU

Emily Thornberry:

[\[166352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions have taken place between UK and EU representatives on the effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on export opportunities for the UK EdTech sector in Europe.

Nick Gibb:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement guarantees that UK investors and service suppliers will be able to access the EU's markets and will not be subject to discriminatory barriers to trade. The agreement includes gold standard rules on services and investment liberalisation.

The Department is engaging with education exporters to help the sector understand and adapt to these new trading conditions, including those within the EdTech sector.

■ Family Hubs

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[168986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of family hubs that (a) opened and (b) closed in each local authority area in each year since 2010.

Vicky Ford:

The department has not made such an estimate. The number of family hubs in each locality is determined by local councils in consultation with their local communities.

■ Further Education and Higher Education: Antisemitism

Alicia Kearns:

[\[167338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) higher and (b) further education establishments have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has asked all English higher education (HE) providers registered with the Office for Students (OfS) to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The IHRA definition is an important tool in tackling antisemitism. Adopting this widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to HE leaders most recently in October 2020 to reiterate the importance of the definition and to urge all providers to consider adopting it.

The government is pleased to report that at least 91 providers have now adopted the definition (78 are HE providers and 13 are further education providers), with many more preparing to adopt the definition. The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers. However, the government will continue to urge them to

adopt the definition and will ensure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

I am proud that so many providers have taken a positive step towards eradicating antisemitism by adopting the IHRA definition, but further progress is still needed to stamp it out. This is why, in the Secretary of State's most recent strategic guidance letter to the OfS, the government asked the OfS to undertake a scoping exercise to identify providers who are reluctant to adopt the definition. The letter asked providers to consider introducing mandatory reporting of antisemitic incident numbers by providers, with the aim of ensuring a robust evidence base, which the OfS can then use to effectively regulate in this area.

The Secretary of State also asked the OfS to ensure that, if antisemitic incidents do occur at a provider, they should consider if it is relevant in a particular case whether the provider has adopted the IHRA definition when considering which sanctions, including monetary penalties, would be appropriate to apply.

We will continue to work across the government to ensure that racism and religious hatred of any kind is not tolerated anywhere, including in our world-leading universities.

■ GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[169070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what process his Department has put in place to allow private candidates to be assessed effectively following the cancellation of GCSE and A Level exams in 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department and Ofqual have ensured there is a clear and accessible route for private candidates to receive a grade this year, at the same time as other candidates.

Private candidates can work with a centre to be assessed on a range of evidence, which could include evidence from an established educational provider and the board-provided assessment materials. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) have issued guidance for centres about assessing private candidates, taking into account their different circumstances. These candidates should have the same opportunity as other students to be assessed on what they were taught, and centres can conduct assessments remotely if needed. Further guidance on assessing all candidates (including private candidates) will be published before the end of March.

We are working with the sector to ensure there are enough centres available to support private candidates, and JCQ will publish a list of available centres by the end of March, giving private candidates the opportunity to find a centre at a similar cost to a normal year. The exam boards have committed that private candidates will not be charged late fees if entries are received by 26 April. To support centres with the additional requirements of assessing private candidates this year, and avoid the cost being passed on to candidates, we are providing a grant for centres to claim £200 per private candidate entry. The Government is encouraging all available exams centres

to sign up to help these candidates achieve their qualifications in this exceptional year.

■ **Northern College Barnsley: Finance**

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [168936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will provide additional support to Northern College in Barnsley to help ensure the future sustainability of residential provision at that College.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member for Barnsley Central to the answer I gave on 4 March 2021 to Question 160672, which is available here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-01/160672>.

Due to concerns with Northern College's future financial position, the Further Education Commissioner undertook a diagnostic assessment at the College on 15 and 16 February 2021.

The Commissioner and the Education and Skills Funding Agency are now working with the leadership at Northern College as they consider options to improve their financial situation. They will also work with Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, who will provide most of the College's funding from August 2021 through the devolved Adult Education Budget, to ensure they are closely sighted on steps taken to try and secure a sustainable financial future for the College.

It will be for the two Combined Authorities to agree the value of the Adult Education Budget that Northern College will receive in future academic years. This income will be key to the financial sustainability of the College moving forward.

■ **Outdoor Education: Coronavirus**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[168812]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 159265 on Outdoor Education: Coronavirus, how much notice he plans to give suppliers of such services of the date on which they can reopen as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased; and if he will make it his policy to permit the resumption of such outdoor activities as soon as is safely practicable.

Nick Gibb:

Schools are advised against all educational visits at this time. The Department is working on advice for schools and colleges on the planning and booking of residential visits when it is safe to do so and in line with the Government's roadmap to recovery, as set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021>. The advice will be published shortly.

■ Primary Education: Coronavirus

Jon Trickett:

[166321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance has been provided to Primary Schools on the wearing of facemasks by teaching staff within a classroom setting.

Nick Gibb:

As new evidence or data emerges, the Government updates its advice accordingly to ensure that all our schools and colleges have the right safety measures in place.

The Department recently published updated guidance for schools to support the return to full attendance from 8 March 2021, which includes updated advice on face coverings. The guidance can be found at the following link:

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

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

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

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

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

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[166337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that children whose parents do not consent to them being covid-19 tested at school are not prevented from attending school.

Nick Gibb:

COVID-19 testing is voluntary, but strongly recommended to all who are eligible as this helps to reduce the spread in schools. Alongside the vaccine, washing hands, wearing face coverings, and maintaining social distancing, rapid testing plays a vital role in reducing transmission rates. No pupil should be denied education on the grounds that they have not been COVID-19 tested at school.

■ Pupils: Hearing Impairment

Lilian Greenwood:

[168885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy that education setting providers should make all necessary reasonable adjustments to ensure that deaf children are not disadvantaged by the use of face coverings in classrooms during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has recently published updated guidance to support the full opening to education from 8 March, which includes updated advice on face coverings. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education>.

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

In addition, the Department now also recommend that in schools where pupils and students in Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained.

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

The Department is recommending these additional precautionary measures for a time limited period until Easter. As with all measures, we will keep this under review and update guidance as necessary.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This includes people who cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability, or if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate. The same legal exemptions that apply to the wearing of face coverings in shops and on public transport also apply in schools, colleges and nurseries.

Schools, colleges and nurseries have duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students to support them to access education successfully. We have made this point clear in guidance.

■ Remote Education: ICT**Siobhain McDonagh:****[166310]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether provision of technology to schools for remote learning during the covid-19 outbreak is subject to open competition.

Nick Gibb:

For the initial programme tender, the Department concluded that a direct award offered the best chance of securing devices quickly in a global market of high demand and limited supply. A contract was awarded to Computacenter (UK) Limited through an existing Crown Commercial Service framework for technology products and associated services under PPN 01/20. The Department also sought assurance about the ability of Computacenter to deliver against the contract from Information and Communications Technology industry representatives.

All subsequent procurements for devices and 4G routers were awarded following competitive tendering on Crown Commercial Service Frameworks. 38 approved Crown Commercial Service suppliers were given the opportunity to bid for the laptop and tablet contracts. Providing options in device brand and model also contributed to achieving value for money driving optimum competition within the market.

We believe that this approach struck the best balance between achieving value for money while ensuring that devices were available for children to use as quickly as possible.

All Department contracts awarded to suppliers of £10,000 or more are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>.

Chi Onwurah:**[166417]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to issue new guidance on the use of technology in schools for self-isolating pupils and staff.

Chi Onwurah:**[166418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure fair competition for digital platforms which provide technology to schools.

Chi Onwurah:**[166419]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of continuing the scheme of providing disadvantaged pupils with devices and other technology post-lockdown.

Chi Onwurah:**[166420]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have used (a) allocated devices, and (b) digital platforms to deliver teaching; and what platforms schools have used to deliver online teaching.

Chi Onwurah:

[166421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many digital devices have been allocated to disadvantaged pupils during national restrictions since March 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is providing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care. We are making available 1.3 million laptops and tablets to schools, colleges, trusts and local authorities, supporting disadvantaged children and young people who would not otherwise have access to a digital device.

As of 15 March 2021, over 1.2 million laptops and tablets have been delivered. More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/laptops-and-tablets-progress-data-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>. The Department has been publishing this data every week during term time, and the next publication will be Tuesday 23 March.

Once received, the laptops and tablets are owned by schools, trusts, local authorities or further education providers, which they can lend to children and young people who need them and are intended to enable schools to provide remote education. In the longer term, the Department expects that schools and colleges will continue to make effective use of the devices they have received.

Through the Department's grant funded, Digital Platforms Programme, over 5,000 schools are now accessing either a Google or Microsoft digital platform for remote learning. Microsoft and Google platforms were chosen as they are free to use to the education sector and had the unified technology and support to set up and deliver effective remote education provision. The primary reason for selecting the Microsoft and Google platforms was that they are free to use to the education sector. Both platforms also have features and functionalities that are designed to be used for communication and collaboration that can assist teachers, pupils and students in remote education. The Department plans to examine the broader effect of the interventions we have put in place to support children and young people to continue their education during the COVID-19 outbreak.

From the 8 March, attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. Schools affected by the remote education temporary continuity direction are still required to provide remote education for pupils where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19. This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a class, group, or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or that clinically extremely vulnerable children need to shield.

Where needed, schools are expected to offer pupils three to five hours of remote education. This includes either recorded or live direct teaching alongside time for pupils to work independently to complete assignments that have been set.

The Department has recently updated guidance and resources for schools around safeguarding and delivery of remote education, which can be accessed via Get Help

with Remote Education available here: <https://get-help-with-remote-education.education.gov.uk/safeguarding>.

■ School Meals: Finance

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[168950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding he plans to allocate to school breakfast provision in each of the next three years; whether the sugar tax levy will be used to fund that programme; how many schools that programme will provide for; and what the eligibility criteria will be for that funding.

Vicky Ford:

Up to £24 million will be available to extend our support for school breakfast clubs until 2023. For the financial year 2021-22, £9 million has been allocated (two school terms). For the financial year 2022-23 (three school terms), we currently estimate that the contract would require £11 million. For 2023-24 (one term), we estimate that £3-4 million will be required.

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy, announced in 2016, provides funds for investment in a number of children's health initiatives including the National Schools Breakfast Programme from March 2018.

We are aiming to provide funding to around 2500 schools. The department has put out an invitation to tender for the delivery of the future programme, which can be accessed here under 'View Opportunities':

<https://education.app.jaggaer.com/web/login.html>.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[166466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with headteachers on ensuring a sufficient supply of face coverings during the covid-19 outbreak from 8 March 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to work closely with other Government Departments throughout its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), as well as stakeholders across the sector. We continue to work to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the impact and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

We recently published updated guidance for schools to support the return to full attendance from 8 March. This guidance includes updated advice on face coverings and how to access them. Due to the increasing use of face coverings in wider society, staff and pupils are already likely to have access to face coverings. In our guidance, we recommend that all schools should have a small contingency stock of

face coverings available, in case an individual has forgotten or damaged their own. The guidance can be found at the following link:

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

Within our guidance, we signpost to the wider DHSC guidance on face coverings. This guidance outlines what a face covering is, the reasons for using a face covering, when to wear a face covering and exemptions. In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, a face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. This includes reusable or single-use face coverings, a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth coverings. The face covering must securely fit around the side of the face. Face coverings are not classified as personal protective equipment, they are instead largely intended to protect other people (rather than the person wearing the face covering) against the spread of COVID-19 infection. The DHSC guidance can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>.

PHE has also published guidance on how to make a simple face covering. This guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>.

To support the return to full attendance and to ensure maximum compliance with the system of controls, DHSC are currently in the process of distributing a delivery of between 5,000 and 7,500 units of free face coverings to all secondary schools and further education institutions for use as contingency stock.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus**

Munira Wilson:

[169061]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring additional protection measures to prevent the transmission of covid-19 in SEN schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to work closely with other Government Departments throughout its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care, as well as stakeholders across the sector. We continue to work to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, to continue to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the impact and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

The Department has recently published updated guidance for schools, including special schools and other specialist settings. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the->

[coronavirus-outbreak](#) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

As the guidance outlines, implementing the system of controls in line with a wider risk assessment creates a safer environment for staff and pupils where the risk of transmission of the infection is substantially reduced. All elements of the system of controls are essential, but the way schools, colleges and nurseries implement the elements will differ based on their individual circumstances. Schools, colleges and nurseries have duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students to support them to access education successfully.

PHE advice remains that the way to control COVID-19 is the same, even with the current new variants. We are further strengthening the measures to provide more reassurance and to help decrease the disruption that the outbreak causes to education. We will keep all measures under review and update guidance as necessary.

■ **Students: Coronavirus**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[168982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure students catch up with learning lost as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

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

In January 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, committed to work with parents, teachers, and pupils to develop a long-term plan to help pupils make up their education over the course of this Parliament. As an immediate step to support nurseries, schools, and colleges, on 24 February 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 from last year and brings the total available to £1.7 billion.

The Department has appointed Sir Kevan Collins as the Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on the approach for education recovery and the development of a long term plan to help 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.

■ Universities: Antisemitism

Layla Moran:

[\[169020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all universities in England adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has asked all English higher education (HE) providers registered with the Office for Students (OfS) to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The IHRA definition is an important tool in tackling antisemitism. Adopting this widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to HE leaders most recently in October 2020 to reiterate the importance of the definition and to urge all providers to consider adopting it.

The government is pleased to report that at least 91 providers have now adopted the definition, with many more preparing to adopt. The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers, but the government will continue to urge them to adopt the definition and ensure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

I am proud that so many providers have taken a positive step towards eradicating antisemitism by adopting the IHRA definition, but further progress is still needed to stamp it out. This is why, in my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education's most recent strategic guidance letter to the OfS, the government asked the OfS to undertake a scoping exercise, to identify providers which are reluctant to adopt the definition. The letter asked them to consider introducing mandatory reporting of antisemitic incident numbers by providers, with the aim of ensuring a robust evidence base, which the OfS can then use to effectively regulate in this area.

The Secretary of State also asked the OfS to ensure that, if antisemitic incidents do occur at a provider, they should consider if it is relevant in a particular case whether the provider has adopted the IHRA definition when considering what sanctions, including monetary penalties, would be appropriate to apply.

We will continue to work across government to ensure that racism and religious hatred of any kind is not tolerated anywhere, including in our world-leading universities.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Aquaculture: Finance

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[168849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support his Department is providing to (a) tilapia farmers and (b) other aquaculture businesses.

Victoria Prentis:

In England funding is available through the Maritime and Fisheries Fund for applications from aquaculture businesses, including those that farm tilapia, looking to make the fisheries and aquaculture sectors more sustainable or to conserve the marine environment, as well as those seeking to adapt their seafood businesses to new trading requirements following EU exit. This funding is delivered by the Marine Management Organisation. Seafood businesses in the rest of the UK should contact their fisheries administrations to see what development support may be available to them.

In addition to this funding, on 9 March the Government opened the Seafood Response Fund which provides a one off grant payment to help businesses cover up to three months of average fixed costs between January and March 2021. This emergency scheme is targeted at catching and shellfish aquaculture businesses. All eligible business will be contacted and invited to apply by the Marine Management Organisation and we expect all payments to be made by 31 March.

■ Bivalve Molluscs: UK Trade with EU**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[169108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of granting equivalence with the EU regulations for bivalve molluscs; and what discussions he has had with his European counterparts on supporting bivalve mollusc exporters in (a) Ynys Môn constituency and (b) the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

There is no scientific or technical justification for the European Commission banning this trade in live bivalve molluscs from GB from Class B waters. Our exports remain of high quality. We are continuing to apply the same rules that we did before EU Exit, exactly reflecting those of the EU. We are willing to provide additional reassurances to demonstrate shellfish health within reason, but this must recognise the existing high standards and history of trade between us.

We know this is an important trade for shellfish exporters in Great Britain and the EU ban has had a significant impact on the businesses. This includes those in Ynys Môn and I have met representatives from the area. We are working with the Food Standards Agency, Cefas and others to look at grading of the waters as this may provide some help to the businesses.

The current restrictions are affecting businesses on each side of the channel and we are talking to Member States in the EU whose businesses are also damaged by the ban.

■ Dogs: Imports**Sir Desmond Swayne:**[\[168814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to facilitate the importation of rescue dogs from Bosnia after the 31 March 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

Dogs imported into Great Britain (GB) for rescue or rehoming must be moved in compliance with the rules on the commercial movement of dogs. Since the transition period ended, the health requirements for entering GB have not changed and there have been no restrictions placed on the importation of rescue dogs from Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, importers must ensure that they meet the requirements as laid down by the European Union (EU) where consignments transit within the EU during the journey to GB.

Dogs: Smuggling**John Spellar:****[166311]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 5 March 2021 to Question 157953, how many people were (a) charged with and (b) convicted of puppy smuggling last year.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra does not hold data on the number of individuals charged with and convicted of puppy smuggling related offences. Local authorities are the enforcement and prosecution body for puppy smuggling related offences. In 2020, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) was notified of two prosecutions by local authorities under the following legislation: The Welfare of Animals (Transport)(England) Order 2006, The Animal Health Act 1981, The Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974 and The Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011. However, local authorities are not required to notify Defra or APHA of prosecutions related to puppy smuggling and so this figure may not represent the total number of cases. We suspect the low number of prosecutions reported for 2020 was a result of courts being closed and cases delayed due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Equine Herpes Virus**Dr Neil Hudson:****[R] [166609]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for the equine population in the UK of the recent equine herpes virus 1 outbreak in Europe.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Newton Abbot on 11 March 2021, [PQ UIN 162616](#).

Export Health Certificates**Ben Lake:****[155315]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of additional Official Veterinarians required to (a) meet the demand for Export Health Certificates in Great Britain once the current authorised trader

grace period for movements from Great Britain to Northern Ireland comes to an end on 1 April 2021 and (b) perform physical checks when full sanitary controls are applied on imports into Great Britain from the EU from July 2021.

Ben Lake:

[155316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of additional Official Veterinarians required to (a) meet the demand for Export Health Certificates for goods leaving Great Britain and (b) perform physical checks on imports into Great Britain from the EU in the event that the EU does not agree to extend the current grace periods.

Victoria Prentis:

As part of the pragmatic and proportionate implementation of the Northern Ireland protocol, the Government is taking several temporary operational steps to avoid disruptive cliff edges as engagement with the EU continues through the Joint Committee. These recognise that appropriate time must be provided for businesses to implement new requirements and support the effective flow of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

For supermarkets and their suppliers, as part of the operational plan the UK committed to at the UK-EU Joint Committee on 24 February, the current scheme for temporary agrifood movements to Northern Ireland (STAMNI) will continue until 1 October in which they do not need to complete health certificate paperwork for agri-food produce. Certification requirements will then be introduced in phases alongside the roll-out of the digital assistance scheme.

Once STAMNI arrangements end, we estimate demand for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for movements to Northern Ireland may increase by between 70,000 and 150,000 per year. Up to 70 FTE Official Veterinarians (OVs) may be required to certify these EHCs. The actual number of EHCs and 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.

Defra has provided £14 million funding to local authorities in England to support Port Health Authorities with the recruitment and training of over 500 new staff, including Official Veterinarians, for the purpose of undertaking new checks on EU imports of animal products, including physical checks.

■ Fish Farming

Daisy Cooper:

[166575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of (a) antibiotics and (b) pesticides used on farmed fish in UK waters on other (i) marine life and (ii) human health.

Victoria Prentis:

All veterinary medicines (including pesticides and antibiotics) used in aquaculture require a Marketing Authorisation, or an import certificate for use of products authorised in other countries, from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD); in addition, they all require a prescription from a Veterinary Surgeon.

The VMD is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) that seeks to protect public health, animal health, and the environment and promotes animal welfare by assuring the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines in the United Kingdom.

The VMD is responsible for the assessment, issue, and maintenance of all national Marketing Authorisations for veterinary medicines, in accordance with UK legislation. The potential effect of medicines (including antibiotics and pesticides) used on farmed fish in UK waters, on marine life and human health, are evaluated as part of the authorisation process for the medicine. If any risks are identified as part of this process, risk mitigation measures (e.g. withdrawal periods, user safety warnings and environmental mitigations) are employed to reduce the risk to acceptable levels. The conclusions of the human and environmental impact assessments are always factored into the benefit: risk assessment, which is used to decide whether or not a product can be authorised.

Even after a veterinary medicine is authorised for use in aquaculture, systems are in place to monitor any unexpected problems for either humans or the environment. The VMD continues to evaluate the safety of the products through the surveillance of suspected adverse reactions (SARs), via the Suspected Adverse Reaction Surveillance Scheme (SARSS).

Following the authorisation of veterinary medicines used in aquaculture, the Environment Agency (EA) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) are responsible for the regulation of discharges of medicines used in fish farms into the water environment in UK waters.

In terms of the UK, the majority of fish farming occurs in Scottish waters. It is widely accepted that SEPA implements one of the strongest regulatory regimes for the aquaculture industry anywhere in the world, designed to strengthen the protection of the marine environment.

The number of medicines that fish farmers can use in the UK is in line with other salmon producing nations in Europe. Unlike some major salmon producing countries, the UK's approach has the added control of requiring those medicines discharged in significant quantities to meet environmental standards set to protect marine life. EA and SEPA only licence discharges to the limit of what the local environment can accommodate sustainably.

■ Livestock: Exports

Dave Doogan:

[169038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's response to the consultation on ending live animal exports for slaughter,

what assessment his Department has made of the requirements and needs of agri-food businesses whose export times necessarily exceed 24 hours.

Victoria Prentis:

The public consultation ended on 25 February and we are currently analysing all the responses we received; we will be publishing the Government response in due course.

■ Organic Farming

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[165577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's commitment to pursue an ambitious new course for the organic sector on 27 January 2021, what specific steps the Government will take to meet this objective.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is taking a multi-pronged approach to support the organic sector. We are working with organic businesses to expand organic exports, whilst working to reduce administrative burden. We are also considering how the new environmental land management schemes under development can best meet the needs of organic producers. We aim to design and administer environmental land management schemes in a way that will support farming and the countryside to make a significant and widespread contribution to environmental, biodiversity and climate change goals, which organic farming can support.

The sector is well placed to export more as UK organic produce clearly demonstrates values such as quality, traceability, and heritage combined with high environmental and welfare credentials which we know consumers across the globe want. To support this we have agreed equivalence arrangements with a number of countries to allow UK organic goods to be exported there, including a mutual recognition with the EU as part of the Trade and cooperation agreement. We are also working alongside the Department for International Trade who recently launched their new programme, Open Doors, and is working with the sector to support them with export opportunities.

The domestic market for organics is also flourishing. There are 6,000 predominantly small and medium-sized UK organic businesses, which in 2019 contributed over £2.5 billion to the UK economy, including exports worth £250 million. In 2020 the total volume of organic produce purchased in the UK rose by 12.9%. This growth in demand represents a great opportunity for UK organic producers, on top of their opportunities in the export market.

Meanwhile, we are streamlining bureaucratic processes inherited from the EU regulatory system to allow for a more flexible and responsive way to handle our regulatory obligations while reducing costs and the burden on the public purse. We intend to use powers under the Agriculture Act 2020 to amend this organics regime to support organic farmers further, benefit the environment, maintain consumer confidence, promote research and innovation in the sector, and reflect future trade agreements. We will consult with organic producers and industry bodies on how to

boost innovation, improve governance of organic certification, group certification and making entry into organic production appealing for new entrants.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Africa: Family Planning and Genito-urinary Medicine

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[168837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding was spent in Africa on (a) family planning and (b) reproductive health programmes by the former Department for International Development in (i) 2015, (ii) 2016, (iii) 2017, (iv) 2018, (v) 2019 and (vi) 2020.

James Duddridge:

The table below provides total bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend by former Department for International Development in Africa on family planning and reproductive health between 2015 and 2019.

	£MILLIONS			
	2015	2016	2017	2018 2019
Family planning	38.7	26.7	76.3	111.0 183.4
Reproductive health care	96.4	146.7	124.4	121.9 105.0

Source: Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid spend 2019

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

■ African Union: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[168997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding was allocated to the covid-19 response funding to the African Union in 2020-21.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has allocated £20 million in 2020-21 to the African Union's Covid-19 Response Fund.

■ BBC Arabic Service

Bob Blackman: [\[167186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 159293, Israel: BBC Arabic Service, whether his Department's grant-in-aid to the BBC World Service is conditional on editorial impartiality; and what assessment he has made of the impartiality of that service's editorial line on matters relating to Israel.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO does not provide grant-in-aid funding to the BBC World Service. Through the World2020 Programme we provide funding for digital enhancements to the BBC Arabic service. The BBC is editorially and operationally independent from Government, so it would not be appropriate to agree objectives of this kind with the BBC. Questions about impartiality or perceived bias are matters for the BBC Board.

■ British Overseas Territories: Carbon Emissions

Luke Pollard: [\[166543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of the UK's Overseas Territories have introduced a Net Zero target in line with UK Government policy.

Nigel Adams:

Ahead of COP26, each of the UK's inhabited Overseas Territories intends to communicate their plan for climate change adaptation and mitigation, which will contribute towards global carbon emission reductions.

■ British Overseas Territories: UN Climate Conference 2021

Luke Pollard: [\[166542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last met with representatives of British Overseas Territories to discuss COP26.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is working closely with all Overseas Territories (OTs) in the lead up to COP26, and UK Officials regularly meet with representatives from the OTs to ensure that their unique perspectives are accurately represented. The UK Government is also designing a specific package to support Territory Governments in the run up to COP26 and beyond. In November 2020, the UK hosted a Joint Ministerial Council for the OTs which included sessions on COP26 and Environmental Protection, led by Lord Goldsmith. At this meeting, territory leaders pledged to work with the UK to secure an ambitious agreement to tackle climate change at COP26. By the time of the Summit, each territory government will have endeavoured to communicate their plan for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The President of COP26 has also asked his Regional Ambassador for Latin America and the Caribbean for COP26 to act as a liaison point for the OTs.

Luke Pollard:

[\[166546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether British Overseas Territories Governments are planned to be represented in the wider UK delegation to COP26.

Nigel Adams:

We want all parts of the British family to contribute to a successful COP26, including the Overseas Territories with their unique perspective. We are currently developing the policy for those who will be included under the COP26 UK delegation. It is too early to confirm names at this stage.

■ **British Overseas Territories: UN Convention on Biological Diversity**

Luke Pollard:

[\[166547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether British Overseas Territories Governments are planned to be represented in the wider UK delegation to COP15 in China.

Nigel Adams:

The UK's ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) does not automatically extend to the Overseas Territories (OTs), but to date the CBD has been extended to five of the UK OTs - British Virgin Islands, St Helena, Ascension Island & Tristan da Cunha, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the Falkland Islands.

The make-up of the UK delegation to CBD COP15 will be confirmed closer to the time and will be dependent on the conference agenda and format.

■ **China: Judges**

Afzal Khan:

[\[169032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department has provided for the training of Chinese judges through the work of the Great-Britain China Centre since 2015; and how many Chinese judges the Great-Britain China Centre has trained that date.

Nigel Adams:

The Great Britain China Centre (GBCC), an arms-length public body independent from Government, facilitates dialogue with China on issues of importance to the UK. It currently receives £500,000 per annum in funding from the FCDO. GBCC uses this funding to support the UK Government's China objectives, including by delivering projects on rule of law and judicial cooperation. GBCC engages with legal professionals through a wide variety of forums, including the UK-China Joint Judicial Expert Working Group on Commercial Dispute Resolution and the UK-China Rule of Law Roundtable. Such initiatives are not training programmes, but instead dialogues that help to foster a better understanding of legal and judicial systems in China and the UK, and promote the rule of law as a key UK value. Given the nature of such

dialogues, it is not possible to establish with precision how many Chinese judges have been engaged since 2015.

■ **Colombia: Military Aid**

Fabian Hamilton: [\[168835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK armed forces personnel are stationed in Colombia to assist with training the Colombian police force.

Wendy Morton:

Fewer than ten members of the UK armed forces are deployed to Colombia to assist the Colombian police service.

■ **Colombia: Overseas Aid**

Fabian Hamilton: [\[168836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) financial and (b) technical support the UK provides to the Colombian (i) police and (ii) armed forces.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a key supporter of the implementation of Colombia's historic peace agreement. Over the past five years, the UK has provided £61.7 million through the Conflict, Security, and Stabilisation Fund (CSSF), which has allowed us to provide niche technical and financial support on stabilisation, policing, and transitional justice. In 2020, the UK launched a three year £2.1 million Police Innovations for Stabilisation in Colombia Programme (SCIP), which is helping the transformation of the Colombian National Police. The SCIP aims to contribute to the modernization of the police service by scaling up and improving police practices with a preventive approach, focusing on i) Community-based police prevention; ii) Transformation of large-scale social conflicts from a rights-based approach; and iii) Gender mainstreaming.

Fewer than 10 UK armed forces personnel are deployed to Colombia in support of the Colombian police and armed forces, as well as in capacity building support to the Colombian Ministry of Defence, which has responsibility for both the Colombian Armed Forces and the police service.

■ **Coronavirus: International Cooperation**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[168996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding was allocated to the covid-19 Therapeutics Accelerator in 2020-21.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has committed up to £40 million of UK aid to the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator. In 2020-21 FCDO allocated £5.6 million to the initiative to support the

rapid development of, and access to, treatments for COVID-19 for the benefit of developing countries.

■ Human Rights

Ed Davey:

[\[168826\]](#)

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 recommendations in Amnesty International's report entitled, *On the Human Rights Frontline: how the UK Government can defend the defenders*, published on 10 March 2021.

Nigel Adams:

We welcome Amnesty International's continued championing of Human Rights Defenders, and are considering carefully the request from Amnesty and other NGOs for a UK Government strategy on Human Rights Defenders. The UK strongly supports Human Rights Defenders worldwide to help enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear. In 2019, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders' which was drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International, and which sets out how the UK Government engages with Human Rights Defenders to advance the human rights agenda globally. In the context of the establishment of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the recently published Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, we will consider what more the UK can do to support Human Rights Defenders in the future.

■ Inter-agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[167840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.

James Cleverly:

DFID and now the FCDO have been consistently supportive of the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS) since it was launched at the October 2018 Safeguarding Summit. FCDO's Safeguarding Unit is a member of the MDS Steering Committee.

The September 2020 **UK strategy: Safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment within the aid sector** stated that we are actively encouraging organisations to sign up to the MDS. FCDO Ministers, including the Secretary of State, publicised the MDS during events in Parliament in November 2020 and January 2021. Senior officials from FCDO's Safeguarding Unit regularly encourage delivery partners, including aid charities, to sign up.

We have not provided any funding to the MDS.

We have not carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the scheme, but data published in February shows that in the two years since the MDS began, over 7,600 sets of misconduct data have been shared thanks to the scheme, resulting in 75 hires being stopped and so helping keep individuals safe from potential risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment linked to the delivery of aid.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[167841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to aid charities on joining the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[167842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment on the potential effect on The Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme of planned reductions in UK aid.

James Cleverly:

DFID and now the FCDO have been consistently supportive of the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS) since it was launched at the October 2018 Safeguarding Summit. FCDO's Safeguarding Unit is a member of the MDS Steering Committee.

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■ **Israel: BBC Arabic Service**

Bob Blackman: [\[167185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 159292, on Israel: BBC Arabic Service, what assessment he has made of whether BBC World Service programming has met his Department's agreed objectives on matters relating to Israel.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO does not provide grant-in-aid funding to the BBC World Service. Through the World2020 Programme we provide funding for digital enhancements to the BBC

Arabic service. The BBC is editorially and operationally independent from Government, so it would not be appropriate to agree objectives of this kind with the BBC. Questions about impartiality or perceived bias are matters for the BBC Board.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Layla Moran:

[\[166528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on reports that a 15-year-old boy, Ali Ayman Saleh Abu Alia, was shot with live ammunition by Israeli forces on 4 December 2020.

Layla Moran:

[\[166529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the nine Palestinian children killed by Israeli forces in 2020, if he will make representations to the Government of Israel about the continued use of live ammunition against Palestinian children.

James Cleverly:

The Government is aware of the high numbers of Palestinians, including children, killed by Israel Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. I expressed my sadness on hearing of the death of Palestinian child Ali Ayman Abu Alaya, following clashes between the Israeli Defence Forces and Palestinian civilians. We continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigation into this case is swift and comprehensive. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

■ Libya: Politics and Government

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[167353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has of the potential effect of the formation of a unity government in Libya in March 2021 on the prospects for long term peace that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomes the endorsement by the House of Representatives of the new Government of National Unity in Libya, charged with leading the country to elections. This outcome is an important step on the path towards the unification of Libyan institutions and a comprehensive political solution that ultimately makes Libya more stable, secure and prosperous. The Government of National Unity must now work to hold national parliamentary and presidential elections in December 2021, improve the delivery of services to the Libyan people, and prioritise implementation of the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement, including the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries.

■ Mohammed bin Salman**Wayne David:**[\[168841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing Magnitsky-style sanctions against Mohammed bin Salman.

James Cleverly:

It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future. To do this could reduce the impact of designations.

■ Myanmar: Health Professions**Afzal Khan:**[\[169034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of reports of attacks on medical professionals and first-aiders by the military in Myanmar; and steps he plans to take in response to such reports.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is appalled at the news that protestors and medical professionals have been subject to attacks inflicted by the military. The violent crackdown on peaceful protestors and other human rights violations is completely unacceptable and requires a strong answer from the international community. The UK has coordinated a strong international response including through the UN Security Council and the G7. We have also sanctioned nine individuals for their role in serious human rights violations during the coup. We are exploring further measures.

■ Myanmar: Politics and Government**Afzal Khan:**[\[169033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to urge the (a) UN Secretary-General and (b) Security Council to intensify diplomatic pressure on the regime in Myanmar, including with a high-level visit to that country and region.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response to the coup in Myanmar, particularly at the UN Security Council. Following the coup, we urgently convened the UN Security Council and secured a statement on 4 February. In response to escalating violence we convened the Council again on 5 March and secured a Presidential Statement on 10 March condemning violence against peaceful protestors.

We welcome the strong statements from the UN Secretary General in response to the coup and subsequent violence. We are working with his office, and with partners, to explore all options such as a high-level visit to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis. I have met the United Nations Special Envoy to Myanmar to discuss our concern at the coup and how we can ensure a coordinated international response.

■ Overseas Aid: Charities

Anna McMorris:

[\[169009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2021 to Question HL11567 on Overseas Aid: Charities, what assessment he has made of the role of small UK-based international development charities in helping his Department meet its seven core development priorities as part of preparing Official Development Assistance budgets for 2021-22; what plans he has to engage with civil society organisations on those budgets.

Nigel Adams:

Civil society organisations have a significant role to play in delivering the seven core priorities. We recognise the unique role played by small UK-based international development charities in understanding and connecting with local communities and delivering support to the most marginalised and vulnerable, including during the latest COVID-19 crisis.

We will share further information with civil society organisations to start working through implications of decisions once they are taken, and we intend to work closely with our partners to implement any changes.

■ Overseas Aid: Family Planning

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[168838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has plans to continue until 2022 with the five-year family planning spending commitments made in 2017 to FP2020, shortly to be renamed FP2030.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[168839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has plans to maintain the same level of spending on family planning beyond 2022 as previously committed to by the Department for International Development as part of FP2020.

Wendy Morton:

An estimated 218 million women of reproductive age (15-49) in low and middle income countries want to avoid or delay pregnancy but for a range of reasons are not currently using modern contraception. That is why the UK is a major stakeholder in the FP2020 global partnership and its follow-on partnership, FP2030.

The UK is proud to advance universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to modern family planning methods in the world's poorest countries. Between 2019-2020 alone, UK aid helped over 25 million women and girls use modern methods of contraception. We are working through the implications of the ODA reductions for individual programmes and activities. No decisions on individual country or sectoral budgets have been made yet.

■ Overseas Aid: Gift Aid**Anna McMorris:****[169007]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what was the total Official Development Assistance spend on Gift Aid was in 2020-21; and what allocation has been set for 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is reported on a calendar year basis. The FCDO National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development', which is due to be published on 8 April, will provide a breakdown of high-level UK ODA spend for 2020, including the estimate of ODA eligible Gift Aid claimed by international development charities.

ODA eligible Gift Aid is determined by the estimated amount of Gift Aid claimed and then spent by charities on ODA eligible activities. As such, it does not have an allocated budget. ODA eligible Gift Aid spend for 2021 will be published in 'Statistics on International Development' in Spring 2022.

■ Overseas Aid: Health Services**Preet Kaur Gill:****[168998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding was allocated to basic health in each of the last ten years.

Wendy Morton:

Information on Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding allocated to the health sector in each of the last ten years is available through the Statistics on International Development (SID) reports. These are published on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statistics-on-international-development>.

In 2019, we spent around £1.4 billion on bilateral programmes to improve health outcomes for the poorest and most vulnerable. The UK also makes significant contributions to global health through multilateral organisations. Approximately £790 million of imputed multilateral expenditure was spent on the health sector in 2019. The 2020 figures on health spend will be published in Autumn 2021.

■ Palestine: Human Rights**Caroline Lucas:****[167180]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how the Government plans to vote at the upcoming 46th UN Human Rights Council on special agenda items motions concerning Palestine.

James Cleverly:

The UK has stood up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, and has been clear that the existence of a dedicated agenda item ('Item 7') damages the

prospect for a two-state solution and does little to advance dialogue, stability or mutual understanding. As such, at the 40th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2019 we moved to voting against all resolutions under Item 7. The 46th session of the Human Rights Council is currently ongoing. This Government will continue to vote against all Item 7 resolutions. Negotiations on the resolution tabled under Item 2, concerning the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are ongoing. We will decide how to vote based on the merits of the final text that is put before the Council.

However, the UN and its member states have every right to address issues of concern in a measured, balanced and proportionate way. We will continue to support scrutiny of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the Human Rights Council, so long as it is justified, proportionate, and not proposed under Item 7.

■ Sanctions

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[168857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Minister is responsible for managing and updating the list of British sanctions against individuals and companies.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government publishes the UK sanctions list on GOV.UK website, which provides details of those individuals and entities designated under sanctions regulations made under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act. When the UK Government makes a decision to create, change or remove a sanctions designation, it will update the UK sanctions list. All designations will need to meet the legal tests as set out in the Sanctions Act, which includes ensuring designations are underpinned by robust evidence. As set out in the legislation, designation decisions are for the Secretary of State.

■ Saudi Arabia: Political Prisoners

Wayne David:

[\[168840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Saudi Arabian authorities on the treatment and detention of (a) Prince Turki bin Abdullah, (b) Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and (c) other senior political detainees in that country.

James Cleverly:

We continue to monitor the cases of Prince Turki bin Abdullah and Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef. The Foreign Secretary raised a number of human rights issues during his visit to Saudi Arabia last year. On 3 March 2021, Lord Ahmad raised a number of human rights issues with the Saudi President of the Human Rights Commission. FCDO Ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights in our engagement with the Saudi authorities. We have consistently pressed for due

process and raised concerns about the use of solitary confinement, lack of family contact and allegations of torture.

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

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[169000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many jobs in his Department will be created in Scotland at each grade in each year until 2025.

Nigel Adams:

On 15 March 2020, the UK Government announced that 500 FCDO roles will move to the department's existing base in East Kilbride by 2025. The future size and shape of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is yet to be established. This will be determined in coming months through ongoing organisational design work, the outcome of the integrated review, and development of a workforce strategy which will include a roadmap for how we will meet our 2025 target.

■ **Senegal: Politics and Government**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[166607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Senegalese counterpart on the recent unrest in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government was concerned by the recent unrest and violence in Senegal, including reports of protesters being killed following the arrest of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko. Our condolences go to the families of all those affected.

The British Embassy in Dakar released a joint statement on 7 March 2021 alongside international partners, including the US, Canada and the EU. We expressed our collective concern over the violent incidents witnessed across the country and called on all parties to exercise restraint, restore calm and engage in dialogue.

On 12 March, our ambassador to Senegal met Foreign Minister Sall to discuss recent events. We are monitoring the situation closely and I plan to speak to my counterpart soon.

■ **Small Charities Challenge Fund**

Anna McMorris: [\[169008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the postponement of Small Charities Challenge Fund funding on (a) UK-based small international development charities, (b) jobs supported by the Small Charities Challenge Fund and (c) the UK achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Nigel Adams:

The impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce how much we spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA). We are currently working through the implications of these changes for individual programmes, including for Small Charities Challenge Fund. No decisions have yet been made.

The UK remains fully committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. Everyone has a role to play to achieve them including communities, local government, the private sector, and civil society.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid

Anna McMorris:

[\[169006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent reductions in UN-authorised cross-border aid mechanisms on the delivery of UK-funded health programmes in Syria.

James Cleverly:

The reduction of UN-mandated cross-border aid has made access to essential healthcare services even more difficult for millions across Northern Syria. Only 6% of public hospitals in the north-east are assessed to be fully functioning. In the North West, widespread food insecurity has led to stunted growth for one-third of children, one in nine pregnant women are malnourished, and COVID-19 is further exacerbating ongoing healthcare issues. The current UN cross-border aid mechanism is critical to ensure the successful delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to hard-to-reach populations such as north-west Syria, with other 330,000 vaccines to be distributed via Turkey.

The UK is clear that no other mechanism can replace the scale and scope of the UN operations in northern Syria, and strongly supports the renewal of UNSCR 2533, so that UN operations can continue to meet the needs in North West Syria, avoiding further humanitarian disaster.

■ Syria: War Crimes

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[168980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure that the perpetrators of war crimes in Syria are held to account.

James Cleverly:

The UK strongly supports efforts to hold perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria to account. Since 2012 we have provided over £13m to support Syrian and international efforts to gather evidence of human rights abuses and violations perpetrated during the Syrian Conflict. This includes over £1.2m in support to the UN International Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM). We will shortly complete an information sharing agreement with the IIIM to strengthen accountability for crimes and abuses committed in Syria. This month I hosted an

event at the 46th Human Rights Council focused on accountability, where I reiterated the UK's commitment on the issue and explored next steps with partners.

The UK has also supported the Commission for International Justice and Accountability to collect evidence and build cases for prosecution of perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity. These efforts played a critical role in achieving the first conviction of a former member of Daesh, and the first court ruling worldwide over state-sponsored torture by the Assad regime in Koblenz, convicting Eyad al-Gharib for complicity in crimes against humanity in Syria. This sends a clear message that abuses in Syria will not go unpunished.

■ Tigray: Internally Displaced People

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[166606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department has provided to displaced people in Tigray, Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

The conflict in Tigray has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, internally and externally, as well as adversely impacting upon those that were already in need of humanitarian assistance. The UK has been consistent in calling for free and unfettered humanitarian access to those people in need, now estimated at 4.5 million. The Foreign Secretary raised the need for humanitarian access to Tigray with Prime Minister Abiy during his recent visit to Ethiopia and pressed for a political dialogue to bring lasting peace to the region. I re-enforced the urgency of the need for humanitarian access when I spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK on 24 February.

The UK is working closely with humanitarian and development agencies to make sure aid reaches civilians affected by the fighting. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are delivering support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. A joint humanitarian and political team from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa visited Mekelle on 5 March. They met with the provisional administration of Tigray, the mayor of Mekelle, humanitarian agencies and people displaced by the violence. The Embassy team heard harrowing accounts of human rights violations, the challenges of aid delivery and how some of the £15.4 million of UK Aid is helping to support those affected by the Tigray conflict. The Government of Ethiopia must act now to protect its people.

■ West Bank: Palestinians

Layla Moran:

[\[166527\]](#)

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 recent report by Israeli NGOs Yesh Din, Physicians for Human Rights Israel and Breaking the Silence, on the widespread practice of Israeli military invasions of Palestinian homes in the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the report by Yesh Din. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the Israeli security forces' rules of engagement. While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension and to use appropriate force.

■ **Yemen: Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[168995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what impact assessment he has undertaken of the reduction in UK aid to Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce how much we spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA). The move to a target of spending 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA, rather than 0.7%, is a temporary measure and we will return to 0.7% when the fiscal situation allows.

Over the course of our next financial year (2021/22), we will provide at least £87 million to the UN Humanitarian Appeal for Yemen, making us the 5th largest donor. This will feed 240,000 of the most vulnerable Yemenis every month, support 400 healthcare clinics and provide clean water for 1.6 million people. We will also provide one-off cash support to 1.5 million of Yemen's poorest households to help them buy food and basic supplies.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Antenatal Care**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[162534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which health professionals are responsible for the delivery of perinatal pelvic floor services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 March 2021]: All healthcare professionals in contact with women in the perinatal period have a role to play in supporting pelvic health. NHS England and NHS Improvement will develop a service model for Perinatal Pelvic Health Services in partnership with 14 Early Implementer Systems

■ **Body Bags**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[166519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2021 to Question 159014, what safeguards are in place to ensure that deceased

persons are not incorrectly identified due to the use of body bags without transparent face windows.

Helen Whately:

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) is responsible for licensing post-mortem facilities and assesses whether licensed establishments adhere to the safeguards for the identification of the deceased set out in its statutory Codes of Practice.

HTA-licensed establishments are expected to use three identifiers attached directly to the deceased for purposes of traceability and identification, usually on a wristband and should also be securely attached to the outside of the body bag. These standards ensure that procedures to identify the deceased are robust, irrespective of the type of body covering that is used.

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[134466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of adult care home residents received the first dose of a covid-19 vaccine by 3 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 13 January 2021]: Data on the proportion of adult care home residents who have received the first dose of their vaccine by 3 January 2021 is not available. This data has been published since 4 February 2021.

NHS England publishes weekly data on the vaccination of residents and staff in older adult care homes which is available at the following link:

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

Ellie Reeves:

[143876]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that working age adults living in care homes receive prioritised access to covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There is clear evidence that those living in residential care homes for older adults have a high risk of exposure to infection and are at higher clinical risk of severe disease and mortality. Therefore, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has advised that this group should be the highest priority for vaccination as part of phase one.

Many younger adults in long-stay nursing and residential care settings will also be eligible for vaccination if they fall into a clinical risk group - for example, those with learning disabilities. Given the likely high risk of exposure in these settings, where a high proportion of the population would be considered eligible, vaccination of the whole resident population is recommended.

■ Coronavirus: Bolton South East

Yasmin Qureshi:

[156323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of covid-19 vaccinations administered each day are administered in Bolton South East constituency.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 February 2021]: The data is not held in the format requested. However, NHS England publishes daily data for vaccinations in England, showing the total first and second doses given to date, by region. NHS England also publish the number of vaccinations in each United Kingdom constituency by age group, updated weekly. The data is available at the following link:

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

■ Coronavirus: Clinics

Jon Trickett:

[166316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of referrals of patients to NHS Long Covid clinics in (a) October 2020, (b) November 2020, (c) December 2020, (d) January 2021, (e) February 2021 and (f) March 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not currently held as referral data for NHS England and NHS Improvement 'long' COVID-19 assessment service centres is experimental and has not yet been validated.

Jon Trickett:

[166317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the location of all NHS Long Covid clinics within the UK.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England has published a list of its post COVID-19 syndrome or 'long' COVID-19 assessment services in England only at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/post-covid-syndrome-long-covid/>

■ Coronavirus: Developing Countries

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[166594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to assist other nations in identifying new variants of the covid-19 virus.

Jo Churchill:

On 26 January, we announced a global offer of United Kingdom genomics expertise to detect new variants of COVID-19. Following this, the New Variants Assessment Platform (NVAP) has been developed by Public Health England. The primary aim of

the NVAP is to support global mapping of variants of concern, feeding into the World Health Organization, with further assessments to determine the risk of vaccine escape when deemed necessary.

In addition to the NVAP there are several work programmes, including through the UK's G7 presidency, which address other aspects of global pathogen surveillance needs.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[133758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with local NHS providers on the (a) ending of and (b) process of emergence from the covid-19 lockdown that began on 6 January 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Ministers and officials have regular discussions with National Health Service providers on a wide range of issues relating to the current national restrictions.

■ **Coronavirus: Easington**

Grahame Morris:

[\[133787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the care and nursing home residents and staff in the Easington constituency will begin to receive the covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Across the United Kingdom, including Easington, vaccines have been delivered directly to care homes since December 2020. Some 10,321 homes, amounting to 98% of homes with older residents have now offered the vaccine.

In the North East and Yorkshire, 94% of residents of older adult care homes who have not had COVID-19 in last 28 days have been vaccinated. This data is not available at constituency level.

■ **Coronavirus: Hospital Beds**

Jon Trickett:

[\[133677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the bed occupancy rate was at each of the Nightingale Hospitals on (a) 1 August, (b) 1 September, (c) 1 October, (d) 1 November and (e) 1 December 2020.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held in the format requested. NHS England and NHS Improvement are collating some data relating to patient activity in the Nightingale hospitals but this information has not been centrally validated.

Grahame Morris:

[\[136495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the holding Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 133784, for what reason the information requested relating to Nightingale Hospitals is not readily available to Departments to provide a timely response to Named Day Questions.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 18 January 2021]: We are working rapidly to provide all hon. Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [133784](#) of 26 January 2021.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitals

Justin Madders:

[\[134477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients were (a) admitted and (b) discharged from each Nightingale hospital in each month of 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 January 2021]: This information is not held in the format requested. NHS England and NHS Improvement are collating some data relating to patient activity in the Nightingale hospitals but this information has not been centrally validated.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[138375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have been treated in each of the Nightingale hospitals, by location of hospital.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held in the format requested. NHS England and NHS Improvement are collating some data relating to patient activity in the Nightingale hospitals, but this information has not been centrally validated.

John Redwood:

[\[142749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many beds in Nightingale hospitals are being used for covid-19 patients.

Edward Argar:

No beds in Nightingale hospitals are currently being used for COVID-19 patients. Nightingale hospitals were activated based on local clinical decisions in response to patient demand and are now in the process of being decommissioned.

■ Coronavirus: Households**Sarah Owen:****[169064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has within its covid-19 roadmap to allow established couples who do not live in the same household and are not eligible to establish a support bubble to mix indoors.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Limiting mixing indoors, where the risk of transmission is much higher, is critical to halting the spread of the virus. Therefore, people will not be allowed to mix indoors with anyone they do not live with or have not formed a support bubble with, until step three of the roadmap, which will come into force no earlier than 17 May. From step three, up to six people or two households will be able to meet indoors. However, couples can currently meet outdoors on a one to one basis for exercise and recreation.

The Government will keep this under review in keeping with its commitment to remove current restrictions based on the data.

■ Coronavirus: Newcastle upon Tyne**Chi Onwurah:****[148783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of high-risk citizens in Newcastle Central constituency have received the (a) first and (b) second dose of a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The data is not held in the format requested. NHS England publish daily data for COVID-19 vaccinations in England, showing the total first and second doses given to date, by region. The number of people in the clinically extremely vulnerable cohort who have received their first and second doses is updated weekly. The number of vaccinations in each United Kingdom constituency by age group is also updated weekly. This data is available at the following link:

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

■ Coronavirus: Pupils**Dr Rupa Huq:****[165616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) offering confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests for all students who test positive for covid-19 after taking an in-school lateral flow test and (b) students being allowed back to school if that PCR is negative.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 March 2021]: Lateral flow device (LFD) tests taken at test sites, such as on school and college grounds, do not require a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) confirmation as these tests are done in a supervised environment. The self-

isolation period must be commenced from the positive LFD test in a supervised environment.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Caroline Lucas:

[133773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to roll out regular covid-19 testing to people working in (a) primary schools and (b) nursery, childcare and early years settings; and what progress he is making on his plans for covid-19 testing in secondary schools; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Lateral flow testing is available to staff of primary and secondary schools, nurseries and colleges, and students of secondary schools and colleges. From 8 March twice-weekly lateral flow testing has also been available to the households, childcare and support bubbles of staff and students.

Students and staff should continue to access testing via their school. Tests for households, support and childcare bubbles can be ordered and collected from local sites or administered through workplace testing programs. Information on who is eligible for regular lateral flow testing and details of how to obtain a test are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Dan Carden:

[133142]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to train health care professionals on how to communicate the safety and effectiveness of the covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England produces comprehensive training and information materials for COVID-19 vaccinators. This includes information about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines and key messages for healthcare professionals to convey to those being vaccinated. All vaccinating staff involved in the deployment programme are required to complete training that includes modules on the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.

Hilary Benn:

[133711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice he has received from Pfizer/BionTech on the implications for (a) patient safety and (b) efficacy of administering the second dose of their covid-19 vaccine more than 21 days after the first dose.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: A phase three clinical trial study on the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine efficacy demonstrated a two-dose vaccine efficacy of 95% with a second dose delivered between 19 and 42 days. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is of the view that the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is likely to provide protection for at least 12 weeks.

The four United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers agreed with the JCVI, that at this stage of the pandemic, prioritising the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list will protect the greatest number of at risk people overall, in the shortest possible time, preventing mortality and protecting the National Health Service. From data available to the JCVI, the first dose of either Pfizer/BioNTech or Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine provides substantial protection within two to three weeks of vaccination for clinical disease and in particular severe COVID-19 disease.

Sarah Owen:

[134188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many doses of a covid-19 vaccine had been received by people in the UK on (a) 6 January 2020 and (b) the most recent date for which information is available.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: This data is not held in the form requested. Data is held on the number of doses of COVID-19 vaccine received by people in the United Kingdom by week. By 3 January 2021, 375,357 people in the UK had received their first dose of vaccine. This increased to 1,085,657 by 10 January 2021. The daily update of the number of vaccinations in the UK is available at the following link:

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

Dame Angela Eagle:

[135826]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 vaccinations have been allocated to and delivered in (a) the North West, (b) Liverpool city region, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey as of 11 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 January 2021]: We do not routinely publish data regarding the allocation and delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations.

Chi Onwurah:

[135935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish regional covid-19 vaccination targets.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 January 2021]: We have no plans to publish regional COVID-19 vaccination targets.

Daisy Cooper:

[136060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his policy on vaccination is to (a) restrict the distribution of vaccinations in order to ensure that

vaccinations for each priority groups is completed in turn across the country, or (b) to make vaccinations available to any vaccination centre that has capacity in order to maximise the overall number of people who are vaccinated, allowing some centres to start vaccinating the next priority groups in one area, before previous groups are completely vaccinated elsewhere.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 January 2021]: Targeted deliveries are being made to areas where there are more people left to vaccinate in the priority cohorts, proportionate to the at-risk population they have registered. This should allow any existing disparities to be addressed, alongside standing up community pharmacy and additional vaccination centres across the country to ensure access for everyone. Each Primary Care Network site 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. Where sites may progress through their supply more quickly than others, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with vaccination sites across the country to ensure that supplies are replenished to continue vaccinating our most vulnerable and to ensure an adequate and consistent supply of vaccine.

Patrick Grady:

[\[137232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on ensuring that asylum seekers are able to access the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 18 January 2021]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly meets with the devolved administrations to discuss a range of topics. The Government is working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure successful delivery of the vaccination programme across the whole of the United Kingdom.

Entitlement to free National Health Service treatment is generally based on ordinary residence in the UK based on clinical need. As there is no charge for the COVID-19 vaccine, the immigration status of a patient is not relevant and therefore no proof of residence is required and there is no requirement to report anyone to the Home Office.

Julian Sturdy:

[\[138946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for a second priority vaccine list once the priority list of vaccinations has been completed; and whether that list would include people with health conditions such as ME and chronic fatigue syndrome who are not classed as clinically vulnerable.

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.

Hilary Benn: [\[139979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy that medical students should be vaccinated against covid-19 as well as all other NHS staff.

Nadhim Zahawi:

All frontline healthcare staff who are eligible for seasonal influenza vaccination should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine. Temporary staff, including those working in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, students, trainees and volunteers who are working with patients are also included.

Jack Lopresti: [\[140048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to prioritise covid-19 vaccinations for the carers of terminally ill spouses.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We recognise the vital role unpaid carers play in caring for vulnerable individuals. Unpaid carers are included in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's priority group six - all individuals aged 16 to 64 years old with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality. This also includes those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.

Jim Shannon: [\[140081\]](#)

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

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has secured early access to 457 million vaccines doses through agreements with eight separate vaccine developers to ensure that the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccines is not delayed. We remain in constant contact with vaccine manufacturers and work hard that the supply to the United Kingdom is not disrupted.

The Government is making excellent progress in its vaccination programme and is on track to have offered all adults their first dose by the end of July and a second dose no more than 12 weeks after their first.

Scott Mann: [\[140204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that vaccination centres work their way through the priority list in the correct order and vaccinate only groups 3 and 4 when as many as possible from groups 1 and 2 have been vaccinated.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In order of priority, most United Kingdom residents will be contacted by their general practitioner (GP) to book their vaccine via an online or telephone system. Those in the initial priority groups can also arrange their vaccination appointment by calling 119 or through the national booking system at the following link:

<http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination>

Additionally, the National Immunisation Management System (NIMS) is used as the national register of COVID-19 vaccinations. At the point that someone receives their COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccinating team will record the information on the NIMS system and a patient's GP record.

The top four priority groups – people aged 70 years old and over, care home residents and staff, health and care staff and clinically extremely vulnerable patients – have now all been offered the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Marco Longhi:

[140291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department made an assessment of the potential merits of altering a person's priority in the covid-19 vaccine rollout if they were about to undergo lifesaving surgery with a substantial stay in hospital, to minimise the risk of that person contracting covid-19 during treatment and recovery.

Nadhim Zahawi:

If someone is due to undergo lifesaving surgery, it is likely they will have already been captured in priority cohort four as clinically extremely vulnerable or cohort six as clinically vulnerable. Included in the description of those classed as clinically extremely vulnerable are those identified based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. If someone undergoing lifesaving surgery is deemed to be at high risk of mortality from COVID-19 by their clinician then they will have been offered their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by 14 February 2021.

Helen Hayes:

[141545]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the accessibility of covid-19 vaccines to carers supporting residents in their own homes; and what discussions is he having with home care providers on this issue.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 26 January 2021]: We will continue to follow the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI) advice and vaccinate those most at risk first and those who work closest with them - care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 years old and health and social care workers, then other people in order of age and risk.

This includes all frontline social care workers directly working with people clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 who need care and support irrespective of where they work, whether they care for clinically vulnerable adults or children or who they are employed by.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[143856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of putting asthma sufferers who purchase asthma medicine abroad in the same priority group as clinically vulnerable asthma sufferers for the covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, having looked at a wide range of evidence, concluded that only a subset of those with asthma are at clinically higher risk from COVID-19. This group is defined as adults with asthma who require continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission. They will be vaccinated in priority group six. Some individuals with more severe asthma may also be included in the clinically extremely vulnerable group, in which case they will be vaccinated in priority group four.

Jon Trickett:[\[146775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the number of covid-19 vaccine doses delivered to each region of (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland in each week week since 1 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccination deployment programmes are managed by the health services in each nation.

The United Kingdom Government is working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure an aligned approach to COVID-19 vaccine deployment. We have procured vaccines on behalf of all parts of the country and the Government is working with the devolved administrations to ensure it is deployed fairly.

Mr Mark Harper:[\[R\] \[146802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using mobile vaccination centres to reach remote communities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 4 February 2021]: Currently, in England, more than 98% of the population is within 10 miles of a vaccine service. In a small number of highly rural areas, the vaccination centre will be a mobile unit.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[148733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who are not registered with a GP can access a covid-19 vaccination when they become eligible.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The terms under which general practices are commissioned to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination services enable practices to vaccinate unregistered patients. Individuals who are not registered with a general practitioner (GP) practice will therefore be able to access the vaccine in line with the priority groups outlined by the Joint Committee

on Vaccination and Immunisation. However, we would strongly encourage everyone to register so that they may be more easily invited for vaccination.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local government, voluntary, community and social enterprise partners and Healthwatch England on a campaign to support all people, particularly those in inclusion health groups, to register with a GP. A key driver of the registration campaign is to support identification of those who should be prioritised for the vaccine.

Claudia Webbe:

[148959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to study the efficacy of a single dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech covid-19 vaccine beyond 21 days.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England (PHE) has been monitoring the effectiveness of the vaccines. Early data has shown that the Pfizer vaccine is highly effective in reducing COVID-19 infections among older people aged 70 years old and over. Since January, protection against symptomatic COVID-19 four weeks after the first dose ranged from 57-61% for one dose.

PHE has also undertaken their first analysis of the early effects of COVID-19 vaccination using routine testing and vaccination data across England. This data, published in a pre-print on 1 March 2021, provides early evidence that a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine is having a significant effect on the reduction of COVID-19 infection, hospitalisations and deaths in those over 70 years old. The Pfizer vaccine was shown as approximately 60-70% effective, rising to 85-90% after two doses. This analysis is available at the following link:

<https://khub.net/documents/135939561/430986542/Early+effectiveness+of+COVID+vaccines.pdf/ffd7161c-b255-8e88-c2dc-88979fc2cc1b?t=1614617945615>

Claudia Webbe:

[148960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to produce an estimate of the efficacy for a single dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech covid-19 vaccine beyond 21 days.

Claudia Webbe:

[148961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of worst-case scenario if it is proven that protection from a single dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech covid-19 vaccine does not persist after 21 days.

Nadhim Zahawi:

After studying all the available data, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) concluded that the first dose of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine provided substantial protection from severe COVID-19 disease within two to three weeks of vaccination. Whilst the second vaccine dose is important to sustain the protection and extend its duration, in the short term the

additional impact of the second dose is likely to be modest and most of the initial protection from clinical disease is after the first dose of vaccine.

The latest data from Public Health England, published on 1 March showed that both the Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines are highly effective in reducing COVID-19 infections among older people aged 70 years old and over. Since January protection against symptomatic COVID-19, four weeks after the first dose, ranged between 57 and 61% for one dose of Pfizer and between 60 and 73% for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

No specific assessment has been made. The decision to extend the dosing interval to up to twelve weeks was based on advice from the JCVI and United Kingdom's four Chief Medical Officers.

Justin Madders:

[155125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the (a) average and (b) furthest distance a vaccinator has been asked to travel to deliver the covid-19 vaccine since the roll out of that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The data is not held centrally in the format requested.

Dan Jarvis:

[161769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the speed of the recruitment process for vaccinators who are already medically qualified and registered.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 8 March 2021]: We are working with the Royal Voluntary Service and St John Ambulance to recruit and train thousands more volunteer vaccinators, who will have all the relevant clinical training, as well as supervision, to ensure they can vaccinate in a way that is safe for patients and for themselves. This includes drawing on the skills of those who have volunteered through the NHS Bring Back Scheme as well as those currently working outside of the National Health Service such as St John Ambulance, independent nurses and occupational health service providers.

In addition, secondary legislation enabling more healthcare workers to administer flu and potential COVID-19 vaccines has been introduced.

Apsana Begum:

[166579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients are registered with the GP At Hand service.

Apsana Begum:

[166580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients registered with the GP At Hand service who have been unable to access a covid-19 vaccine in their local areas.

Apsana Begum:

[\[166581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how far on average patients registered with the GP At Hand service have had to travel to access their covid-19 vaccinations.

Apsana Begum:

[\[166582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long on average patients registered with the GP At Hand service have had to wait between being (a) offered a covid-19 vaccine and (b) able to attend an appointment to receive that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As at 1st March 2021, there were 92,470 patients registered at the 'GP at Hand' practice.

Data on how many of those patients have been unable to access COVID-19 vaccines in their local area, how far they have had to travel, or the average wait between being offered a vaccine and attending to receive, is not collected centrally. Individuals eligible for vaccination have a choice on where they can book their COVID-19 vaccination. More than 98% of the country is now within 10 miles of a vaccination site.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[166595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department made an assessment of the potential merits of turning the NHS Nightingale Yorkshire and the Humber Hospital into a covid-19 vaccination centre.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are no plans to use the NHS Nightingale Yorkshire and the Humber as a vaccination centre.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[167350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people who cannot receive a covid-19 vaccine for medical reasons.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are very few people who cannot receive one of the current COVID-19 vaccines for medical reasons. Those who have previously had an allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, or to a component of one of the COVID-19 vaccines should not receive the vaccine. Current guidance is that pregnant women should also not receive a COVID-19 vaccine, unless they are at high risk of exposure to the virus and this cannot be avoided or where the woman has underlying conditions which put them at very high risk of serious complications of the virus.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[167282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many officials in (a) his private office and (b) the wider Department have been allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is shown in the following table. All members of staff shown work in the wider Department.

YEAR	NUMBER OF STAFF
2018-19	3
2019-20	6
2020-21	10

■ Health Services: Ethnic Groups

Catherine West:

[140223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve care for black women in the NHS.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: On 8 March the Government launched a call for evidence and is seeking to collect views on women's health. It will run for a period of 12 weeks until 30 May 2021 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/womens-health-strategy-call-for-evidence>

With the Maternity Transformation programme there is greater service user participation in the design and delivery of maternity services through Maternity Voices Partnerships which is making efforts that diverse voices are heard. The NHS Long Term Plan committed to implementation of an enhanced and targeted continuity of carer model for black, Asian and minority ethnic women, as well as for women living in the most deprived areas.

The National Health Service is providing additional support for pregnant women from ethnic minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as research shows heightened risks.

The Department's policy research programme is funding the National Institute for Health Research's Policy Research Unit in Maternal and Neonatal Health and Care to conduct research to identify the factors associated with the excess risk of maternal death experienced by black and South Asian women.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[166476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to include the HIV prevention drug PrEP in the Core GP contract.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[166477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to develop a Patient Group Direction so that the HIV prevention drug PrEP can be made available in pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

In March 2020, we announced that the HIV prevention drug pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) would be routinely available across England in 2020/21. This year we provided £11 million to local authorities for routine commissioning of PrEP and this is now in place in the majority of areas in the country. Routine commissioning of PrEP, alongside other measures, will take us closer to our ambition of zero new HIV transmissions in England by 2030.

Provision of PrEP, including the settings in which PrEP should be made available outside of specialist sexual health services, will be considered as part of the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish in 2021.

■ HIV Infection: Health Services

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[166475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that HIV/AIDS support services are available throughout the country.

Jo Churchill:

We are developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish in 2021. We will consider issues relating to the role and future need for HIV support services in England as part of the process to develop both the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan.

■ Intelling: Data Protection

Rachel Reeves:

[\[153229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contractual penalties are in place to ensure that clinical contact tracers working for Intelling follow NHS guidance on personal data safety.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: NHS Test and Trace's primary suppliers and their sub-contractors providing contact tracing services are legally obliged to adhere to the standard data handling conditions of all preferred Government suppliers, alongside terms specified by the Department. Contracts awarded by the Department

include break clauses and clauses on managing product and service quality and delivery. These provisions allow us to review contracts and/or reclaim money where a company is deemed to have supplied faulty products, services or failed to deliver key outputs. Activity which could prompt the use of such mechanisms includes failure to meet legal obligations on data handling.

■ Liver Diseases: Health Services

Tracey Crouch: [\[166382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people with (a) liver cirrhosis, (b) liver failure and (c) liver cancer who have died as a result of a covid-19 infection.

Tracey Crouch: [\[166383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of covid-19 deaths of patients with liver failure as a proportion of all covid-19 deaths in the UK.

Tracey Crouch: [\[166385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to include liver services in NHS covid-19 recovery plans.

Tracey Crouch: [\[166387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that comprehensive care pathways for liver patients are implemented by each Integrated Care System in England.

Tracey Crouch: [\[166388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the geographical variation in (a) the provision and (b) delivery of liver care services in England; and what plans his Department has to (a) reduce that variation and (b) improve liver disease survival rates.

Jo Churchill:

It is not possible to disaggregate the number of people with liver cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer who have died as a result of COVID-19 infection, nor the number of COVID-19 deaths of patients with liver failure as a proportion of all COVID-19 deaths in the United Kingdom. This is due to the way data is collected

The NHS Long Term Plan recognises the importance of preventing avoidable liver disease through targeted policies to address alcohol consumption and obesity. As the NHS recovers from the impact of the pandemic, specialised commissioning teams will be refocusing their efforts on achieving the ambitions set out in the Long Term Plan and working with local systems and clinical networks to improve outcomes for people with preventable and complex conditions, including liver disease.

NHS England is developing liver networks in England, supported by the Hepatobiliary Clinical Reference Group, to enable quicker access to specialised liver services, as

well as providing clinical advice on disease prevention and referral practice. To address geographical variation, NHS England and NHS Improvement, with support from Public Health England, are helping acute hospitals with the highest rates of alcohol harm to establish or improve specialist alcohol care teams. Areas at highest need will be supported by targeted national investment. To improve survival rates and support earlier detection of alcohol-related liver disease, NHS England and NHS Improvement are also developing a commissioning for quality and innovation scheme to incentivise increased cirrhosis and fibrosis tests for alcohol dependent patients in acute and mental health services.

Tracey Crouch:

[\[166386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure continuity of care for patients with liver cancer during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Service is committed to ensuring continuity of care for cancer patients, including patients with liver cancer.

To ensure essential and urgent treatment for all cancers have continued throughout the response to the pandemic, COVID-19 protected surgical hubs have been established for cancer surgery across the country.

Tracey Crouch:

[\[166389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure effective implementation of liver disease and cirrhosis assessments in routine NHS health checks in England.

Jo Churchill:

In line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's recommendations, NHS Health Check guidance advises that individuals whose alcohol consumption puts them at higher risk should be referred for a cirrhosis assessment.

The NHS Health Check includes an assessment of an individual's alcohol consumption using AUDIT-C. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, support is given to access behavioural and clinical interventions as well as follow on tests for those individuals whose alcohol consumption is identified as high risk.

■ NHS Test and Trace: Complaints

Justin Madders:

[\[166474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many complaints his Department has received from hon. Members on NHS Test and Trace; and what the average response time is to those complaints.

Helen Whately:

The information is not held in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ NHS: Health Services**Tim Farron:** [\[168861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to publish any documents developed during the covid-19 outbreak on NHS strategy for surge capacity and triage.

Edward Argar:

The Department has no plans to publish further documents specifically on National Health Service surge capacity and triage. The Department continues to work closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, including on the planning guidance for the service for 2021- 2022.

■ Syringes**John Spellar:** [\[166312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that there are (a) adequate and (b) secure supplies of syringes to the NHS.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The number of needles and syringes procured by Public Health England (PHE) for use with COVID-19 vaccine was consistent with administering two doses of vaccine to the United Kingdom population with an allowance for wastage. Subsequently there has been a further increase with additional vaccine availability. PHE is now procuring additional 250 million syringes associated with possible future COVID-19 vaccine candidates.

■ Test and Trace Support Payment**Rachael Maskell:** [\[136568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the payments under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme in deterring people from physically attending their workplace.

Helen Whately:

No such assessment has been made.

HOME OFFICE**■ Electronic Surveillance****Mr David Davis:** [\[168827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish details of the two internet service providers that are reported to be conducting trials with her Department and National Crime Agency with the intention to collect Internet Connection Records.

Mr David Davis:

[\[168828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the legal basis is for the trials recording the Internet Connection Records of their customers, including any relevant sections of applicable legislation.

Mr David Davis:

[\[168829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data has been (a) collected and (b) stored as part of the two trials collecting Internet Connection Records.

Mr David Davis:

[\[168830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been (a) allocated and (b) budgeted for trials collecting Internet Connection Records.

Kevin Foster:

The acquisition and retention of Internet Connection Records (ICRs) is provided for in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. ICRs are subject to restrictions set out in the Act and can only be acquired for the specific investigative purposes set out in Section 62.

Acquisition of ICRs in the vast majority of cases is subject to independent authorisation by the Office for Communications Data Authorisations. The use of communications data is subject to the oversight of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC).

It is longstanding government policy not to disclose the specific communications data (CD) acquired by public authorities or retained by telecommunications operators under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) and its predecessors. This would include details of any data to be acquired or retained and the details of any Telecommunications Operators involved in any trial.

It would be operationally and commercially sensitive to disclose the funding allocations for a trial or any other use of investigatory powers.

■ Immigration

Anne McLaughlin:

[\[152564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UKVI applications have had an official positive decision implemented at a different time from family members under the same application in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) in 2020.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office are unable to state how many UKVI applications have had an official positive decision implemented at a different time from family members under the same application in 2018, 2019 and 2020 as this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Asylum claims may include one or more family members who are accepted as dependant on the principal applicants claim. It is important to fully consider all the evidence available, including that provided by dependants or other family members

who have made claims in their own right, and to recognise protection issues which may arise in the family context when considering such claims.

Dependants of an asylum applicant who have been included in the initial asylum claim will, if the principal applicant is granted Asylum, HP, Family or Private Life leave to remain (LTR) or Discretionary Leave, normally be granted leave of the same duration and status as the principal applicant

Neil Coyle:

[166455]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of decisions made by the UK on applications for family reunification with a beneficiary of international protection in 2020 were (a) accepted and (b) rejected.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on Family Reunion in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Data on grants of Family Reunion visas are published in table Fam_D01 of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#). Data on applications and outcomes of Family Reunion visas by nationality are included in the 'Family: other' visa subgroup in tables Vis_D01 and Vis_D02 of the [entry clearance visas detailed datasets](#).

Although 'family reunion' visas are not separately available, the vast majority of 'Family: other' visas are family reunion.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to year ending December 2020. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the [asylum summary tables](#) and [entry clearance summary tables](#). The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and entry clearance visas.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[166520]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2021 to Question 160772 on Members: Correspondence, what steps she is taking to increase resources to achieve the target of responding to 95 per cent of written correspondence from hon. Members within 20 working days; and what estimate she has made of when her Department will meet that target.

Kevin Foster:

UK Visas and Immigration are currently managing a recruitment campaign across its Correspondence Services to fill all vacancies by the end of April 2021.

A recovery plan for responses to Hon. Members is in place and it is envisaged responses to new enquiries from Hon. Members will be back within service standard in quarter two of 2021/22.

Alison Thewliss:

[\[168966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration Detention of 22 December 2022 on the processing of individuals arriving in the UK on small boats.

Chris Philp:

With apologies for the delay, a response was issued on 18 March 2021.

■ **Travellers: Caravan Sites**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[168811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 8 March 2021, Government response to Consultation: Strengthening Police Powers to Tackle Unauthorised Encampments, HCWS826, what criteria the courts will be required to apply to determine whether the (a) damage, (b) disruption and (c) distress which a person (i) has or (ii) is deemed likely to cause is significant; and what assessment her Department has made of whether it will be feasible to provide sufficient clarity in such criteria to allow for the practical application of that proposed legislation.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government will issue guidance relating to the exercise of the functions of police officers and constables in respect of trespassers on land. It will be for the courts to determine on a case by case basis when damage, disruption and distress is deemed to be significant.

■ **Visas: Applications**

Chris Grayling:

[\[166332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the priority service for visa applications will be reinstated.

Kevin Foster:

Priority Visa services are currently available in some locations overseas, but availability will differ by territory depending on Covid restrictions in place in a specific area at any one time. If available, customers are able to purchase these services when booking an appointment at a visa application centre.

Super Priority and Priority services have also been reinstated in the UK for Work and Study routes, including applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain. It is anticipated these services for Marriage and Settlement routes in the UK will be reinstated by the end of March 2021.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing: Construction****Stuart Anderson:**[\[166569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to build more affordable homes and reduce social housing provider waiting lists.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and is investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which will leverage up to £38 billion of private finance and provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow.

Approximately 50% of the homes delivered will be for affordable home ownership, supporting aspiring homeowners to take their first step on to the housing ladder. We will also deliver more than double the homes for social rent compared to the current programme, with around 32,000 social rent homes due to be delivered. Furthermore, our £9 billion Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme, running to 2023, will deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes. Since 2010, we've delivered over 517,100 new affordable homes, including over 365,800 affordable homes for rent, of which 148,000 homes for social rent.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[166372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will review Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to ensure that local authorities can exclude those applying for contracts who have previously constructed premises with cladding that has been found to be a dangerous fire risk.

Shabana Mahmood:[\[166373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will review the guidance for Central Government Departments, Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies for local authorities so that bidders can be excluded if they are responsible for constructing premises with cladding that has been found to be a dangerous fire risk.

Shabana Mahmood:[\[166374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, whether it is his Department's policy that local authorities can mandatorily or discretionarily exclude a bidder from a contract if they are responsible for constructing premises with cladding that has been found to be a dangerous fire risk.

Christopher Pincher:

Matters concerning the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 are the responsibility of Cabinet Office, including the grounds for the exclusion of bidders from public procurement procedures that are set out within the regulations.

These rules set out the circumstances in which bidders must, or may, be excluded from a public procurement process for a variety of criminal offences and in other specific situations. Decisions need to be based around firm evidence and individual contracting authorities, including local authorities, are responsible for their own decisions on these matters.

The Green Paper “Transforming Government Procurement” includes a package of proposals to bolster the existing exclusion grounds, including discretionary measures to exclude for poor past performance even if it had not led to termination, damages or comparable sanctions. The Government will also investigate the feasibility of developing a centrally managed debarment list of suppliers who have relevant convictions to make it easier for contracting authorities to identify organisations that must be excluded from public procurement. Detailed analysis of the consultation responses will follow in due course.

More widely, it is also clear that further measures must be put in place to prevent unsafe products being placed on the market and there must be action against companies which advertise and sell unsafe products, or who game the testing regime.

That is why we have brought forward proposals to strengthen the regulation of construction products in the draft Building Safety Bill. We have also announced in January a new national regulator for construction products, and a review into the construction product testing regime. We expect all public suppliers to act with integrity and to high standards, and will act where we see standards falling short.

Andrew Rosindell:

[167170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Government is providing assistance to developers to help meet the increased demand for cladding remediation work and avoid delays in sales of leasehold property.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is providing further grant funding of £3.5 billion in addition to the £1.6 billion already provided to fund the removal of unsafe cladding systems from residential buildings 18 metres and over in England. We are also providing expert construction consultation support to actively engage with those planning and undertaking remediation work being funded by the Government to increase the pace of remediation. However, Government funding and other support does not absolve industry from responsibility and taking action. We expect developers, investors and building owners to cover remediation costs themselves, meeting their legal and contractual obligations, recovering costs or drawing on warranties where applicable, without passing on costs to leaseholders. This is happening in over half of all private sector high-rise residential buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding systems.

■ Burlington House

Tim Loughton: [\[167152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the terms of agreement were between his Department and the Societies for the drawing of a new lease for Burlington House in 2018.

Eddie Hughes:

A lease was agreed in 2005 by the then Government and the Learned Societies. The terms of the 2005 lease remained unchanged in the 2018 lease renewal.

Details of the 2005 lease, can be obtained from the Land Registry.

■ Burlington House: Rents

Tim Loughton: [\[166299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment was made of the (a) public value benefit and (b) value to the public purse in his Department's plans for the New Burlington House apartments.

Tim Loughton: [\[166300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the future options for New Burlington House; and if he will make a statement.

Tim Loughton: [\[166301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the difference for his Department's rental projections for the Burlington House Societies (a) as forecast in 2005 and (b) latest figures available; and if he will make a statement.

Tim Loughton: [\[166302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the percentage increase was in rent set by his Department payable by the Courtyard Societies in each year since 2005; for what reasons there has been a change in the level of the percentage increase since 2012-13; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

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 rent is at a limited rate to reflect the fact that the land is being used for cultural and educational purposes. The Department and the Learned Societies agreed in 2019 that the market rental value of the land was £50 per square foot but the Learned Societies are currently paying only £15.35 per square foot.

The rents charged are in accordance with the Learned Societies' leases. The rents are calculated annually by way of a valuation that is based on evidenced market

transactions and have followed growth of market rent since 2005. Rents can therefore rise and fall. The Department does not currently hold a forecast of rental projections from 2005. Rents based on the current lease are updated each year following valuation.

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.

Tim Loughton:

[166303]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of rent increases at Burlington House on (a) scientific research and (b) culture and heritage.

Eddie Hughes:

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 rent is at a limited rate to reflect the fact that the land is being used for cultural and educational purposes. The Department and the Learned Societies agreed in 2019 that the market rental value of the land was £50 per square foot but the Learned Societies are currently paying only £15.35 per square foot.

The rents charged are in accordance with the Learned Societies' leases. The rents are calculated annually by way of a valuation that is based on evidenced market transactions and have followed growth of market rent since 2005. Rents can therefore rise and fall. The Department does not currently hold a forecast of rental projections from 2005. Rents based on the current lease are updated each year following valuation.

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.

■ Coastal Communities Fund and Coastal Revival Fund

Anthony Mangnall:

[166571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when coastal communities will be able to reapply for the (a) Coastal Communities Fund and (b) Coastal Revival Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to levelling up all parts of the UK. Coastal communities will be able to benefit from funding announced in the recent budget. This includes £220 million funding for UK Community Renewal and the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund which will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. In addition, the UK Government is launching a new £150 million Community Ownership Fund to help ensure that communities across the UK are prepared for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

■ **Flags: EU Countries****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[166339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to revise the Guide to Flying Flags to remove the EU flag as a flag that does not require consent to fly; and whether he plans to take steps in response to organisations that fly the EU without consent.

Christopher Pincher:

My Department is currently reviewing the provisions regulating the flying of flags in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertising) (England) Regulations 2007.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Permitted Development Rights****Daisy Cooper:**[\[169049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 104771, whether local authorities can exercise their discretion in order to permit those (a) pubs and (b) hospitality businesses that are in listed buildings to erect temporary outside structures within their curtilage.

Christopher Pincher:

We are considering what further planning measures may be needed to support such businesses as the COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

■ **Housing: Parking****Justin Madders:**[\[166472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of households have driveway access in England.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG does not collect data specifically on driveway access, but the Department's English Housing Survey collects information on parking provision (i.e. garage/off street/street parking etc.). The latest data show that 38% of dwellings have garage parking and an additional 29% have off street parking.

This data is available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898459/DA2201_Parking_and_mains_gas - dwellings.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898459/DA2201_Parking_and_mains_gas_-_dwellings.xlsx).

■ Levelling Up Fund

Steve Reed: [168943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average cost to local authorities that are not prioritised for capacity funding of bidding for funding from the Levelling Up Fund.

Steve Reed: [168944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has plans for an appeal process to challenge priority status for capacity funding under 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>.

While preference will be given to bids from higher priority areas, the bandings do not represent eligibility criteria, nor the amount or number of bids a place can submit.

Bids from categories 2 and 3 will still be considered for funding on their merits of deliverability, value for money and strategic fit, and could still be successful if they are of exceptional high quality.

■ Levelling Up Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund

Bob Blackman: [167855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the barriers to immediate publication of the methodology used to calculate the index employed to categorise places for the (a) Levelling Up Fund and (b) UK Community Renewal Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund funding reaches the most in need, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density.

We are committed to transparency and a methodological note explaining how the 100 priority places were determined has been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note>.

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>.

Kate Osamor:

[167919]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons the Government does not plan to publish immediately the methodology used to calculate the index employed to categorise places for the Levelling Up Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund funding reaches the most in need, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density.

We are committed to transparency and a methodological note explaining how the 100 priority places were determined has been published:

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

■ Regional Planning and Development: Research

Steve Reed:

[168941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish Government commissioned research into public attitudes to its levelling up agenda by external polling and communications agencies.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department has not commissioned research into public attitudes on the levelling up agenda by external polling or communications agencies.

■ Right to Buy Scheme

Justin Madders:

[166468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his planned timescale is for the national roll out of the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme.

Christopher Pincher:

The Voluntary Right to Buy Midlands pilot is in its final stages, and has been fully evaluated. The Government committed to evaluate new pilot areas, and further details will be provided shortly.

■ Service Charges: Research**Justin Madders:**[\[167890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 157189 on Service Charges: Research, when the Government will consider the findings of Cambridge University's report.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is considering the findings of the Cambridge University report alongside the recommendations made on service charges in the report of the Lord Best working group on the Regulation of Property Agents.

■ Somerset House**Tim Loughton:**[\[166298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment was made of the (a) public value benefit and (b) value to the public purse when Somerset House was transferred from HM Government to the Somerset House Trust in 1997.

Eddie Hughes:

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

■ Towns Fund**Steve Reed:**[\[168945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish all details of all the Town Deals published on 3 March 2021, including details of the projects which received funding and those which did not.

Luke Hall:

The 45 towns which were offered Town Deals on 3 March are currently reviewing their prospective Deals. Once towns have accepted their Town Deal offers, Heads of Terms are signed and then also published on local authority websites, which include the details of projects MHCLG has agreed to fund.

■ Towns Fund: Impact Assessments**Steve Reed:**[\[168942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish any equalities impact assessment that was conducted for the Towns Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

The Towns Fund is helping level up the country, driving economic regeneration, productivity and growth.

The Government's approach to considering equalities impacts is set out in both the Towns Fund Prospectus, published in November 2019 and the Further Guidance published in June 2020.

All local authorities are required to consider the equalities impacts of their proposals as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In the guidance we also made clear the responsibilities of the Town Deal Board to fulfil duties on public authorities under the Equalities Act 2010.

■ UK Community Renewal Fund**Bob Blackman:**[\[167856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how the measure of household income used for the index of economic resilience for the UK Community Renewal Fund differs from the Income Deprivation Domain used in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Bob Blackman:[\[167857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation to prioritise investments through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund funding reaches the most in need, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density.

We are committed to transparency and a methodological note explaining how the 100 priority places were determined has been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note>.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) does not represent a 'one size fits all' solution to measuring economic need - not all of the variables it considers are relevant to the particular interventions we want to support through the UK Community Renewal Fund, and some of the variables it does not consider, such as productivity, are central to the policy goals of the Fund.

Kate Osamor:[\[167920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how the measure of household income used for the index of economic resilience for the UK

Community Renewal Fund differs from the Income Deprivation Domain used in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Kate Osamor:

[167921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation to prioritise investments through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund funding reaches the most in need, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. We are committed to transparency and a methodological note explaining how the 100 priority places were determined has been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note>.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) does not represent a 'one size fits all' solution to measuring economic need - not all of the variables it considers are relevant to the particular interventions we want to support through the UK Community Renewal Fund, and some of the variables it does not consider, such as productivity, are central to the policy goals of the Fund.

■ UK Community Renewal Fund: Wales

Ben Lake:

[167293]

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

Eddie Hughes:

The Government has been engaging with key stakeholders on the design and priorities of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund since 2016, including holding a series of engagement events. Our engagement events have taken place across the UK. Over 500 stakeholders attended these events across a variety of sectors, including Welsh local authorities.

We will continue to engage stakeholders as we consolidate policy development for UK Share Prosperity Fund.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: India**

Claudia Webbe: [\[167977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of prohibiting the sale of weapons including water cannons, tear gas and batons to India which could be used against peaceful protestors.

Graham Stuart:

HM Government takes its export control responsibilities extremely seriously. All export licences are assessed in accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria'). For items that require an export licence, the Consolidated Criteria provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require us to consider the possible impact of providing equipment and its capabilities. HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

■ Trade Agreements: Australasia

Emily Thornberry: [\[166347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when the draft texts of (a) the UK-Australia and (b) the UK-New Zealand trade agreements will be shared with members of the (i) Trade Advisory Group on Agri-Food and (ii) Trade and Agriculture Commission.

Greg Hands:

The expertise of the Agri-food Trade Advisory Group (TAG) is drawn upon at key stages during negotiations, including on the initial Market Access offers for both the Australia and New Zealand free trade agreements. We intend to share draft text for both agreements with TAG members where this is relevant, and we have systems in place in preparation for this.

Treaty text will be shared with the Trade and Agriculture Commission at a point appropriate to ensure the membership's time and expertise is used most efficiently, and within the bounds of Parliamentary protocol.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Emily Thornberry: [\[166346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions have taken place between UK and Australian trade negotiators on potential UK import restrictions on meat products treated with growth-promoting antibiotics.

Greg Hands:

The fourth round of negotiations on the Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was held virtually from 22nd February to 5th March, covering trade in goods among other issues typically covered in a comprehensive FTA.

The UK prohibits the use of artificial growth hormones in both domestic production and imported products, and is a world leader in the battle against antimicrobial resistance – significantly cutting our use of antibiotics in farming.

Furthermore, all agri-food products imported into the UK under existing or future FTAs will, as now, have to comply with our import requirements, which include clear controls on limits of veterinary medicine residues in meat and other animal products.

■ **Trade Agreements: Canada**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[166589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what timeframe is for the free trade agreement with Canada to come into force.

Greg Hands:

The UK-Canada Trade Continuity Agreement (TCA) completed Parliamentary scrutiny in the UK under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act on 3rd February 2021, and will come into force once Canada completes its own parliamentary procedures.

■ **Trade Agreements: Ghana**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[166350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has to refund the tariffs incurred between the date on which agreement was reached in principle on the UK-Ghana Interim Trade Partnership Agreement and the date on which it came into effect.

Greg Hands:

There are no plans to refund duties that were correctly charged to imports originating from Ghana until the agreement took effect.

■ **Trade Agreements: Japan**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[166349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to mitigate the effect of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on producers in (a) Jamaica, (b) India, (c) Mauritius, (d) Pakistan, (e) South Africa, (f) Sri Lanka and (g) Vietnam.

Greg Hands:

The Government's published impact assessment identified certain products in these countries that may face greater competition when exporting to the UK as a result of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. However, it concludes that the agreement is not likely to have major implications for trade flows between the UK and these countries.[1]

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-japan-cepa-final-impact-assessment>

■ Trade Agreements: USA**Emily Thornberry:**[\[166348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions UK and US trade negotiators have had on the effect of a UK-US trade deal on the economies of Caribbean countries.

Greg Hands:

The Scoping Assessment of the UK-US Free Trade Agreement, published on 2 March 2020, set out that the agreement could affect countries other than the UK and the US, including countries in the Caribbean region, although our modelling suggests that there would be a negligible impact on the long run GDP of these countries.

UK negotiators have presented the information on potential impacts to their US counterparts as part of discussions on trade and development and seek to ensure the UK-US trade agreement supports our broader objectives on trade and development, which include supporting developing countries to reduce poverty through trade.

■ Trade in Services Agreement**Scott Benton:**[\[167336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to recommence multilateral talks on the proposed Trade in Services Agreement.

Graham Stuart:

Making multilateral progress on services trade liberalisation is a priority for the UK as an independent trading nation. As an active member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the UK is advancing market access negotiations through the Joint Initiatives on Services Domestic Regulation and E-Commerce, which draw on and have a much broader membership than the Trade in Services Agreement. Demonstrating further global services leadership, we are co-sponsoring exploratory market access discussions on environmental services and financial services at the WTO. We will continue to advocate strongly for services trade liberalisation in our multilateral and plurilateral engagement, including through the UK Presidency of the G7 trade track and through the G20.

JUSTICE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Grahame Morris:**[\[913661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Attorney General on the safety of jury trials as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Chris Philp:

The Lord Chancellor regularly meets with the Attorney General and discusses a range of priority issues, which will include the impact of COVID-19 on the courts.

The access to justice provided by courts and tribunals is of critical importance. It is of top priority of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to ensure that this essential public service is delivered safely.

HMCTS has risk assessed every Crown Court and introduced a range of safety controls to ensure that jury trials are safe and that all our courts are Covid-secure. For example, we have installed plexiglass screens in over 450 court rooms and jury deliberation rooms, provided additional touchpoint cleaning, mandated the use of face coverings in all communal areas, introduced one-way systems and taken steps to reduce footfall and remodelled office areas to ensure social distancing. Public health experts have endorsed these measures. Throughout the pandemic transmission of Covid-19 between jurors and court users in jury trials has been low.

The Government's roadmap out of lockdown for England was published on 22 February. The proposed lifting of restrictions set out in Steps 1 to 3 will not have any direct bearing on jury trial safety measures in that they do not provide any opportunities to operate outside the current Covid-secure risk assessment process and measures, which are already well established and will remain in place.

Ahead of Step 4, as more is understood about the impact of vaccines on transmission and a far greater proportion of the population has been vaccinated, the Government will complete a review of social distancing measures and other long-term measures that have been put in place to limit transmission.

As we have throughout the pandemic, we will continue to act on the standards, advice and guidance available for workplaces, and where those change, we will update our policies, in consultation with Public Health organisations, to meet any new guidelines issued. In our planning, we will consider any variations in the approaches of the devolved nations.

■ **HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Fees and Charges**

Alexander Stafford:

[166627]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with the Home Office on the issue of fees payable to HM Courts & Tribunals Service across the range of civil applications that are made by police forces.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice works closely with all government departments, including the Home Office, on the matter of fees payable by public authorities to HM Courts & Tribunals Service in civil and family proceedings; and will continue to do so. It is right that we seek 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. These contributions are used to fund a more effective and efficient courts service and support access to justice. In 2019/20, there was a net fee income of £724m against the £2bn running costs of HMCTS.

■ Magistrates: Equality**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[166593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release, Judicial retirement age to rise to 75, published on 9 March 2021, how his Department plans to allocate the £1 million to increase diversity within the magistracy.

Chris Philp:

MoJ is investing in a recruitment and attraction programme to recruit more and more diverse magistrates. This will include the introduction of new IT that will enable better tracking of magistrate recruitment data, and outcomes, including by diversity data. We will also be investing in a targeted marketing strategy in 2021 directed at under-represented groups in local areas to boost magistrate recruitment.

■ Magistrates: Retirement**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[166591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of former magistrates who will be entitled to re-enter the judiciary as a result of the change to magistrates' retirement age in (a) West Yorkshire and (b) England and Wales.

Imran Ahmad Khan:[\[166592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release, Judicial retirement age to rise to 75, published on 9 March 2021, whether judicial office holders other than former magistrates between the ages of 70 and 75 will be entitled to re-enter the judiciary.

Chris Philp:

When the new mandatory retirement age (MRA) comes into force, there will be a transitional provision to enable retired magistrates to apply to return to the bench, subject to business need. We are currently updating our modelling to ascertain the impact of an increase to 75 on the supply of magistrates (both regionally and nationally) and on our recruitment requirements for 2021/22 and beyond.

Judicial office holders who are in office when the new mandatory retirement age comes into force will be able to continue sitting until 75. Judges below the High Court are already able to have their appointments extended, on an annual basis, up to the age of 75, where there is a business need. In addition, salaried judges can also be authorised to sit in retirement on an ad hoc basis up to the age of 75. We therefore do not intend to provide for transitional arrangements to allow for the reappointment of judges who have retired but are younger than the new MRA.

■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[166360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support he plans to make available to prevent homelessness for prison leavers in the (a) Wales, (b) North East, (c) West

Midlands, (d) East Midlands, (e) London, (f) South West and (g) South Central National Probation Service region, from 1 April 2021.

Alex Chalk:

While our new scheme to support prison leavers will begin in five of the twelve NPS regions this year, there will continue to be a range of support available for those leaving prison in the other seven regions, including offender management, rehabilitation services and charity organisations across England and Wales for those at risk of homelessness. In addition, we have set up seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPTs) to help find accommodation for offenders upon release. These taskforces were initially set up for each of the 7 old divisions but will soon reflect the new regional arrangement of the NPS.

HPTs will work across England and Wales to ensure strategic links are in place with Local Authorities, Police, Housing Associations, substance misuse services and health services. They will also work closely with offender managers, who retain responsibility for individuals and their rehabilitation plan, to help homeless offenders into stable accommodation.

HM Prison and Probation Service has published an Accommodation Operational Framework that sets out the roles and responsibilities of prisons, probation and wider partners and a series of commitments. We are currently putting in place regional contracts with accommodation support providers under the new Dynamic Framework ahead of the unification of probation services in June.

The future performance framework for probation unified delivery will include a target on the number of individuals being housed on release from custody (90%), aligned with current prisons metrics, to promote joint working between prisons and the National Probation Service in supporting prisoners leaving custody to find a home.

We will also measure settled accommodation for all people under supervision (those released from prison and those on community sentences). This will assess the status three months after commencement of supervision (80%), supporting referrals to accommodation services provided under the Dynamic Framework.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[166361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funding his Department plans to allocate to the Homelessness Prevention Taskforces operating in each National Probation Service region from 1 April 2021.

Alex Chalk:

In 2021-22, £1.86 million will fund the 12 regional Homelessness Prevention Taskforces. This will provide a Band 6, a Band 5 and a Band 3 member of staff in each region – that is £155,000 per region.

Five of the 12 probation regions in England (East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, Greater Manchester, Kent Surrey and Sussex, and the North West) will be launching a new accommodation service in summer 2021, providing up to 12 weeks'

worth of basic temporary accommodation for prison leavers who would otherwise be homeless.

£20 million will be allocated between the five regions. As yet the allocation to each region has not been determined. Funding will be allocated according to the number of people we forecast being released homeless in each area, and will reflect the learning gathered from both the Covid-19 emergency scheme, and the offender accommodation pilot.

It is our intention, pending the Spending Review later this year, to proceed to roll out the accommodation provision nationally.

■ Reoffenders: Females

Ms Lyn Brown:

[166357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons the statistics for reconviction rates by sex and custodial sentence length, published alongside the report Women and the criminal justice system 2017 on 29 November 2018, were not updated for the publication of the report Women and the criminal justice system 2019 on 26 November 2020.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System. The content and structure of section 95 equalities reports under the Criminal Justice Act 1991 (including Women and the Criminal Justice System) may vary each year depending on user demand for particular topics and data availability.

In the 2017 report (published in November 2018), bespoke analysis on custody lengths by proven reoffending and sex was provided and published. However, this analysis was not updated in the 2019 report (published in November 2020) due to prioritising other areas of analyses for the report and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this analysis required access to the police national computer (PNC) which had limited and heavily prioritised availability at the time to minimise the non-essential travel by our analysts.

The latest statistics for proven reoffending can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2018>

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[166599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that appeals of benefit decisions can continue to be heard during the covid-19 lockdown announced on 5 January 2021.

Chris Philp:

Throughout the pandemic, appeals have continued to be decided on the papers, or heard using telephone and other remote technology. Additionally, HM Courts &

Tribunals Service has introduced safety measures, so that face-to-face hearings can be held for any cases, which cannot be decided on the papers or heard remotely.

The decision as to how a hearing is conducted is a matter for the judge, who will determine how best to uphold the interests of justice.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Child Tax Credit: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh: [\[165602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many households in Northern Ireland are subject to the two-child limit in relation to Child Tax Credits; and how many children in total live in those households.

Louise Haigh: [\[165603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what estimate the Government has made of the number of children in Northern Ireland that are in poverty as a result of the Child Tax Credit two-child limit.

Louise Haigh: [\[165604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the (a) Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Work and Pensions Committee's joint recommendation, in September 2019, to halt implementation of the two-child limit in Northern Ireland, pending a full investigation into its financial impact on families with children and the potential discrimination against those with larger families and poorer communities, and (b) the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on families dependent on social security, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of undertaking that recommended investigation.

Louise Haigh: [\[165605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has had discussions with the (a) Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and (b) Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential effect on levels of (i) poverty and (ii) child poverty in Northern Ireland of (A) maintaining the universal credit £20 uplift for at least a year and (B) extending that uplift to legacy benefits.

Louise Haigh: [\[165606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the CEDAW Committee's assessment of the effect of austerity measures on women in the UK, whether the Government has made an assessment of the effect of austerity measures on women in Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

While welfare and employment are devolved matters in Northern Ireland, we have been working closely with the NI Executive throughout the pandemic and have provided substantial additional resources to enable it to respond to the crisis. The

Executive holds no statistical information on the impact of welfare programmes, but there is no doubt that it is committed to combating poverty via the Anti-Poverty and Child Poverty strategies, which were agreed to in the New Decade, New Approach agreement.

A range of additional support measures are available for the people of NI through the Finance Support Service, including: the Universal Credit Contingency Fund short-term living expenses grant; the Discretionary Support self-isolation grant; the short-term benefit advance; the Social Fund budgeting loan; and the Social Fund Sure Start Maternity grant. These are in addition to the welfare mitigations schemes in place.

The UK Government has injected £9.3 billion to strengthen the welfare system. Increased Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit allowances will benefit those most in need by up to £1,040 this financial year.

Our long-term ambition is to tackle poverty through a reformed system that works with the labour market to encourage people to move into work wherever possible. Since 2010 in the UK there are: 200,000 fewer people in absolute poverty; 100,000 fewer children in absolute poverty; and 100,000 fewer pensioners in absolute poverty. Moreover, absolute poverty rates have fallen in every region.

TRANSPORT

■ Blue Badge Scheme: Theft

Sir Charles Walker:

[168850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to introduce an alternative means of registration and identification for disabled car users to eliminate the problem of blue badge disabled parking discs being taken from cars; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department of Transport has no plans to make changes to the legislation that governs the Blue Badge Scheme. The Department works closely with local authorities to improve the consistency of local enforcement to tackle fraud and misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme, including the use of powers to tackle abuse provided in the Disabled Persons Parking Badges Act 2013, such as the power to retain and cancel badges found to be stolen.

■ Civil Servants: Location

Jim McMahon:

[168993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of the relocation of his Department's civil servants to (a) Birmingham and (b) Leeds in each forthcoming financial year.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department's strategy for growing its presence in Birmingham and Leeds is focussed on relocating roles, not individuals, recruiting local talent in and around Birmingham and Leeds. Additionally, existing staff will be able to relocate to Birmingham and Leeds on a voluntary basis, continuing in their current role from a new location.

The cost of doing so is dependent on a number of factors including the proportionate mix of new starters and the relocation of existing staff, and the required changes in estate.

We are working with Government Property colleagues to source office solutions in both locations which may require different short and medium-term options. Separately we have actively consolidated our London estate as flexible ways of working lead us to having less reliance on traditional office space.

Better use of technology and innovative working practices will enable us to continue working effectively from multiple locations and minimise travel costs between offices.

The relocation of 650 roles to Birmingham and Leeds will support the local economies, creating jobs and supporting inward investment, as part of Levelling Up.

■ **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Postal Services**

Drew Hendry:

[168974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has held with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) on (a) the time frames from the (i) postage of a notification to (ii) implementation of a driving license revocation and (b) whether the DVLA has made an assessment of the potential merits of using guaranteed delivery day postage systems for such revocation notifications.

Rachel Maclean:

When the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) determines that a driving licence should be revoked for medical reasons, the law requires that the notice of revocation must be served in writing to the licence holder. The letter notifying the individual of the revocation is sent by first class post and the licence is revoked either one or two working days after the letter is sent, depending on the time the letter is dispatched.

The Royal Mail's current service aim is to deliver over 90 per cent of first class post by the next working day, including Saturdays. The DVLA already makes allowances for Bank Holidays and non-working days.

The DVLA has considered other guaranteed delivery day postage systems. However, these require someone to be at the address and to sign for the item which is not always possible. Sending these letters by first class post ensures delivery is made irrespective of whether anyone is available to receive the letter.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Euston Station**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[168882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of reducing the number of HS2 platforms planned at Euston Station from 11 to 10 on the (a) overall capacity on (i) HS2 and (ii) the HS2 Eastern route and (c) reliability and resilience of HS2 services.

Andrew Stephenson:

Work is ongoing to develop an optimised design and delivery strategy for Euston Station, including consideration of opportunities, efficiencies and scope reductions to address identified cost pressures. As part of this work, the Department and HS2 Ltd have, with the involvement of other partners, been investigating whether building the HS2 station in a single phase would speed up delivery and reduce the overall cost. This work is currently indicating that moving to a slightly smaller, simpler HS2 station at Euston would have some benefits in terms of terms of reducing costs and risks. This work will help inform the way forward, with a final decision expected in Spring 2021.

Initial HS2 Ltd analysis indicates that moving to a slightly smaller HS2 station at Euston maintains the station infrastructure capacity to run all of the services in the planned HS2 Phase 2b Train Service Specification. The future development of the final HS2 timetable, in due course, will have close regard to optimising resilience and capacity.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: North East**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[168884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Eastern leg of HS2 goes ahead.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government is committed to ensuring the East Midlands, Yorkshire, and the North East reap the benefits of high-speed services. The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), will consider the sequencing and delivery of HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other rail investment projects to ensure the benefits of these investments are delivered to passengers and communities more quickly. We will publish the IRP this Spring.

■ Railways**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[168883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase rail connectivity between Nottingham and the rest of the UK.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We are always looking to improve rail connectivity and am pleased to say that the new Midland Mainline timetable in May will reduce journey times for peak trains between Nottingham and London St. Pancras by up to 10 minutes.

■ Roads

Jim McMahon:

[\[168992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many miles of road in England are (a) conventional motorways, (b) controlled motorways, (c) dynamic hard shoulder, (d) all-lane running and (e) strategic road network.

Rachel Maclean:

The latest complete figures available for motorway road classes are shown in the table below. These figures have been compiled using the different data sources which have been outlined in the footnotes for the table:

ROAD CLASS	2019[1]
A) CONVENTIONAL MOTORWAY	1,564
b) Controlled Motorway	141
c) Dynamic Hard Shoulder	63
d) All Lane Running	141
e) Total SRN [2]	4,519

Source: Highways England scheme information and DfT

1. Road Length Statistics on the Strategic Road Network in England
1. DfT Road Length Statistics on the Strategic Road Network in England

■ Roads: Cycling

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[166597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much money has been spent on upgrading roads with provisions for cyclists in (a) Wakefield, (b) West Yorkshire and (c) England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On the 9th May 2020 the Government announced a £2 billion five-year package of funding for cycling and walking. This included a £225 million Active Travel Fund for English Local Authorities in the current financial year to enable them to deliver new safe cycling and walking measures in their areas. West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) was allocated over £12.5 million of this funding. Decisions on how much of this funding to spend in which parts of its region are matters for WYCA. The

Spending Review in 2020 confirmed that over £250 million of dedicated funding will be made available for cycling and walking in 2021/22, and decisions on how the rest of the £2 billion will be spent will be taken as part of the next multi-year Spending Review.

■ Trains: Hydrogen

Dehenna Davison:

[\[167947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to include hydrogen trains in the Transport decarbonisation plan; and what his timeframe is for ordering the first hydrogen train fleet.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is developing an ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport. The Network Rail-led Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS) makes recommendations about whether hydrogen or battery trains or electrification will likely be the best way to decarbonise each part of the network. TDNS will inform the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the procurement of rolling stock.

The Department is supporting work to understand and develop hydrogen trains, so that they can be introduced smoothly onto lines where and when they are appropriate.

Dehenna Davison:

[\[167948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of trialling hydrogen trains on the Tees Valley line to help decarbonise the railway network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government believes that there will be a role for hydrogen trains in decarbonising the railway. My Department is considering the case for running hydrogen trains in Teesside.

■ Transport for London Financial Review

Sarah Olney:

[\[168994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost to the public purse was of the KPMG report examining Transport for London's finances that was commissioned in June 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

Costs associated with the Government Led Review of Transport for London's financial position totalled £1,216,107. This expenditure is critical to providing evidence to support Government's policy making, including the funding settlement with TfL from October 2020, worth up to £1.7 billion. This is part of the overall extraordinary government support of up to £3.3 billion for TfL to date.

TREASURY**■ Amazon: Corporation Tax****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[166486\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend the Digital Services Tax to goods provided directly from Amazon.

Jesse Norman:

The Digital Services Tax is a tax that ensures search engines, social media platforms, and online marketplaces pay UK tax that reflects the value they derive from UK users.

The Government is unable to discuss tax in relation to specific businesses. The DST is a temporary measure and will be removed once an appropriate global solution is in place.

■ Banks: Closures**Paul Maynard:**[\[167844\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of bank closures on local communities.

John Glen:

The decision to close a branch is a commercial issue for banks and building societies and the Government does not intervene in these decisions or make direct assessments of the impact of closures.

However, the Government does believe that the impact on communities should be understood, considered and mitigated where possible. That is why the Government continues to be supportive of the Access to Banking Standard which commits firms to ensure customers are well informed about branch closures, the bank's reasons for closure and options for continued access to banking services. These include the Post Office, which allows 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers to carry out their everyday banking at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

In September 2020, the FCA also published guidance setting out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches or the number of free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of a planned closure on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs, and other relevant branch services and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This will ensure the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly.

■ Beer: Excise Duties

Mr Richard Holden: [\[169067\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the increase in beer duty required to achieve revenue neutrality for (a) bottled and (b) off-licence beer on licenced premises.

Mr Richard Holden: [\[169068\]](#)

, To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the potential increase in cider duty required for (a) bottled and (b) off-licence beer on licenced premises from a keg or barrel to achieve revenue neutrality by offsetting a beer duty reduction of (i) 1p per pint (ii) 5p per pint (ii) 10p per pint (iii) 50 percent and (iv) 100 percent.

Mr Richard Holden: [\[169069\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the potential cost to the Exchequer of reducing licenced premises beer duty for (a) beer and (b) cider from a keg or barrel of not less than 20 litres to (i) 1p per pint (ii) 5p per pint (ii) 10p per pint (iii) by 50 percent and (iv) by 100 percent.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has consulted industry and other stakeholders on the possibility of charging different alcohol duty rates in different places as part of its Alcohol Duty Review. As noted in the call for evidence document, while beneficial to recipients, such a differential would add complexity and cost to the existing duty arrangements. The Government is now analysing the feedback received and will respond in due course.

■ Business: Insurance

Justin Madders: [\[166469\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of Business interruption insurance claims that have been paid out since the Supreme Court ruling.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the independent non-governmental body responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry.

The FCA has set out its expectation that insurers should move quickly to resolve claims as determined by the Supreme Court judgment, making interim payments wherever possible.

The Government is working closely with the FCA to ensure that the rules are being upheld during this crisis and fully supports the regulator in its role.

■ Capital Allowances

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[169022\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the total value of planned capital investment that will be brought forward into the two-year eligibility period for super-deduction from future financial years.

Jesse Norman:

The OBR provides independent scrutiny of Budget measures (and considers HM Treasury analysis as part of this process). The OBR has said that, at its peak in the financial year 2022-23, the super-deduction will bring forward 10% of business investment with a value of £20bn.

The economic impacts of the super-deduction are incorporated in the OBR's forecasts contained within its Economic and Fiscal Outlook, which is available online.

■ Corporation Tax: Foreign Investment in UK

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[169023\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will make an assessment of the effect on the level of inward investment in each year since 2010 of Government corporation tax policy changes since 2010.

Jesse Norman:

The estimated economic impacts of reductions in the rate of Corporation Tax since 2010 were reflected in the OBR's forecasts at the time those reductions were announced and detailed in the OBR's published Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

■ Credit Cards and Mortgages: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[166471\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending (a) mortgage and (b) credit card payment holidays during the covid-19 outbreak until September 2021.

John Glen:

Mortgage and consumer credit payment holidays have helped support borrowers to manage their finances through a period of uncertainty.

Borrowers who have not yet taken a payment holiday are still able to apply for one. Borrowers who have taken an initial payment holiday will be able to top this up to six months. The Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA's) guidance released on 17 November sets out that this will remain an option for borrowers until 31 March 2021. However, the FCA guidance also notes that all payment holidays will need to end by 31 July.

For borrowers that have already taken a full six months payment holiday, the FCA's guidance sets out that firms should continue to provide support through tailored forbearance options. This could include granting new mortgage payment holidays. As

borrowers still requiring assistance after that point could be in serious financial distress the FCA believe it is right that lenders are able to understand their financial position in order to lend responsibly.

Over 2.75 million mortgage payment holidays and over 2.5 million consumer credit payment holidays have been provided since the start of the pandemic.

■ **Directors: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Tim Farron: [\[166365\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether directors of limited companies are eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Directors who pay themselves a salary through a PAYE scheme are eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

For periods from 1 November 2020 to 30 April 2021, an employer can claim for employees employed on or before 30 October 2020. The employer must have also made a PAYE Real Time Information submission to HMRC between 20 March 2020 and 30 October 2020, notifying a payment of earnings for that employee.

■ **DMB Solutions: VAT**

Caroline Lucas: [\[166375\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HMRC liquidation claim for DMB solutions Ltd, HMRC reference 075 2142906 03, what steps have been taken to recover the £578,497.83 VAT element of HMRC's claim from the company's directors personally; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC cannot release this information as it relates to an identifiable individual or organisation.

■ **Finance: Advisory Services**

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[167913\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support money advice organisations in communities.

John Glen:

In January 2019 the Government established the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) with the objectives to simplify the existing public financial guidance landscape and offer more holistic support to consumers. MaPS brings together the functions of the three former organisations that provided free-to-use financial guidance: the Money Advice Service, The Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise.

The Government is committed to helping people access money guidance when they need it and recognises the impact of the pandemic on people's personal finances.

MaPS partners with local money guidance organisations and signposts to them through its website and its online Money Navigator Tool. This tool was developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and was launched in June 2020; it provides financial guidance tailored to individual needs.

■ Housing: VAT

Jim Shannon:

[\[166426\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the potential cost benefits of reducing VAT on (a) building products and (b) low-carbon technologies used to retrofit homes to improve (i) indoor air quality, (ii) energy efficiency and (iii) the health of occupants.

Jesse Norman:

The Government already makes available a reduced rate of VAT on the installation of energy efficient products, including solar panels and micro combined heat and power units, when certain conditions are met.

Extending the current VAT relief would come at a significant cost to the Exchequer, and there are no current plans to extend the scope of the relief already in place. However, the Government keeps all taxes under review.

■ Incentives

Luke Pollard:

[\[166555\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reintroducing the Job Retention Bonus; and when he plans to publish guidance on retention incentives.

Jesse Norman:

The objective of the Job Retention Bonus (JRB) was to incentivise employers to retain employees between November, when the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was due to end, and the end of January 2021. However, the subsequent extension of the CJRS to April (now September) allowed employers to retain their staff during that period by covering 80% of the furloughed employees' wages. Given this further extension to the end of September, the original policy intent of the JRB has fallen away.

The Government remains committed to deploying a retention incentive at the appropriate time.

■ Ministers: Gifts and Endowments**Anneliese Dodds:****[169021]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to publish the document entitled HMT ministers' meetings, hospitality, gifts and overseas travel: 1 April to 31 July 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

The transparency data titled: 'HMT ministers' meetings, hospitality, gifts and overseas travel: 1 April to 30 June 2020' was published here on 29 October 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel-1-april-to-30-june>

However, it wasn't added to the collection page on gov.uk at that time due to an administrative error. It can now be viewed on the GOV.UK collection page at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

■ Off-payroll Working: Hampstead and Kilburn**Tulip Siddiq:****[168983]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of IR35 changes on businesses in Hampstead and Kilburn constituency; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of delaying the implementation of IR35 changes until April 2022.

Jesse Norman:

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published at Spring Budget 2021 sets out that the reform of the off-payroll working rules is expected to affect up to 60,000 medium and large enterprises, about 180,000 individuals working through their own companies, and approximately 20,000 agencies nationally. The TIIN can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021>. No specific assessment has been made of the potential effect on businesses in Hampstead and Kilburn constituency.

The changes to the off-payroll working rules come into effect on 6 April 2021 and were legislated for in Finance Act 2020.

Further delay to the implementation of the reform would have very significant drawbacks. As well as the fiscal cost, it would prolong the fundamental unfairness of taxing two people differently for the same work. It would also extend the disparity between the private and voluntary sectors, and the public sector, where the reform has been in place since 2017.

■ Retail Trade: Internet

Tim Farron:

[\[166364\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the tax per transaction for retail purchases that are made (a) online and (b) offline.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published a Call for Evidence on 21 July, as part of its Fundamental Review of Business Rates, to gather views from stakeholders on all elements of the Business Rates system and a number of alternative taxes including an Online Sales Tax.

One of the objectives of the Call for Evidence was to understand the impact of business rates on various sectors, including retailers.

The Government is considering responses to the Business Rates Review and will respond in due course.

■ Revenue and Customs: Expenditure

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[169024\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the annual resource departmental expenditure budget of HM Revenue and Customs has been in each year since 2010.

Jesse Norman:

The table below shows HM Revenue and Customs annual resource budget each year from 2010-11 to 2020-21 as set out in the Published Supplementary Estimates.

YEAR	DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE LIMITS (DEL) ADMINISTRATION BUDGET £'000	DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE LIMITS (DEL) PROGRAMME BUDGET £'000	TOTAL RESOURCE DEL BUDGET £'000
2010-11	3,784,260	0	3,784,260
2011-12	974,765	2,791,599	3,766,364
2012-13	962,941	2,727,991	3,690,932
2013-14	880,271	2,774,454	3,654,725
2014-15	832,604	2,685,790	3,518,394
2015-16	855,177	2,752,864	3,608,041
2016-17	899,811	2,961,435	3,861,246
2017-18	870,647	3,110,710	3,981,357
2018-19	966,111	3,108,663	4,074,774

YEAR	DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE LIMITS (DEL) ADMINISTRATION BUDGET £'000	DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE LIMITS (DEL) PROGRAMME BUDGET £'000	TOTAL RESOURCE DEL BUDGET £'000
2019-20	1,037,220	3,333,234	4,370,454
2020-21	1,110,118	3,851,341	4,961,459

Note: This table includes depreciation. This table excludes Capital expenditure, Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) and Non-Budget Spending.

■ Royal Opera House: Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Chris Grayling:

[\[168844\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 March 2021 to Question 163647, if he will publish information on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme specifically in relation to theatrical freelancers whose self-employment income was incorrectly classified as PAYE by the Royal Opera House.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is unable to comment on specific cases due to taxpayer confidentiality.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Self-assessment

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[168954\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 March 2021 to Question 166463 on Taxation: Self-assessment, how many and what proportion of people already in receipt of a Self-Employed Income Support Scheme grant received prior notice that failure to submit a tax return for the tax year 2019-20 by (a) 2 March 2021 or (b) any other date would result in them being ineligible for the fourth and fifth grants.

Jesse Norman:

The Government announced at Budget 2021 on 3 March 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth grant. This provides certainty on the policy to business as the economy reopens and means that the SEISS continues to be one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The Chancellor also announced that the fourth and fifth SEISS grants would be based on 2019-20 Self-Assessment tax returns and individuals must have submitted their 2019-20 tax return by 2 March 2021.

The effect of this is that more than 600,000 people are brought into scope who either became self-employed in 2019-20, or were ineligible for previous grants but now may

be eligible for the fourth grant on the basis of submitting their 2019-20 Self Assessment tax return.

As in previous years HMRC ran a prominent communications campaign in order to prompt taxpayers to file their return by the due date. This year, in addition, they issued further press releases during February, complemented by messaging via social media and, where possible, direct emails and SMS texts to taxpayers who had not yet filed returns, and their agents.

HMRC analysis of filing volumes around this period suggests that an estimated 97% of individuals who claimed the third SEISS grant (about 2.1 million people) had submitted their 2019-20 Self-Assessment tax return by 28 February.

■ **Small Businesses: Money**

Paul Maynard:

[\[167845\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many small businesses rely on cash to function in the UK.

John Glen:

Research commissioned by the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) in 2019 found that over half of small businesses accepted cash while it accounted for only 14% of their income on average.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted cash usage in the short-term and is likely to have accelerated the longer-term trends of declining cash use. However, it is too early to determine the lasting effect. In November 2020, the Bank of England published their Quarterly Bulletin, which included analysis of cash acceptance. Based on a survey in July 2020 they found that 42% of people had visited a store in the previous six months that did not accept cash. That represented an increase on the January figure of 15%.

The Government created the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group in 2019, which has provided a forum for the public bodies to formally co-ordinate respective approaches to access to cash. This is chaired by HM Treasury and attended by the Bank of England, PSR, and Financial Conduct Authority. The Group published an update on the actions of the Group's members in July 2020. The Government continues to engage with the regulators to monitor and assess risks around cash, including those resulting from COVID-19. In order to help control the virus, all businesses and individuals are encouraged to follow the latest Government advice. To work safely, retailers have been recommended to minimise contact around transactions, for example, considering using contactless payments. It remains the individual retailer's choice as to whether to accept or decline any form of payment, including cash or card.

The Government has committed to bring forward legislation to ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term. In October 2020, the Government published a Call for Evidence on Access to Cash, which sought views on the key considerations associated with cash access, including deposit and withdrawal

facilities, cash acceptance, and regulatory oversight of the cash system. The Government is considering responses to the Call for Evidence and will set out next steps in due course.

■ **Stock Market: Internet**

Drew Hendry:

[\[168975\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of further regulatory controls by the Financial Conduct Authority to prevent organisations from promoting their products as inherently based around a share index as opposed to other forms of entity such as gambling platforms.

John Glen:

The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA) prevents the communication of invitations or inducements to engage in investment activity or claims management activities (otherwise known as financial promotions) unless the communication is made or approved by an authorised person, or subject to an exemption. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has powers under FSMA to make rules concerning the standards financial promotions must meet. Controlled activities in scope of the financial promotions regime are set out in legislation.

The advertisement of any activities which are not controlled activities is regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority. FSMA also specifies that certain regulated activities can only be carried out by authorised or exempt persons. Offering contracts and/or products with the purpose of securing profit or avoiding loss by reference to fluctuations in an index is a regulated activity and therefore can only be carried out by such persons. Gambling platforms are regulated by the Gambling Commission which requires gambling platforms to comply with Advertising Codes administered by the Advertising Standards Authority.

■ **Treasury: Darlington**

Steve Reed:

[\[167210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 162625, whether any new jobs will be created by the location of HM Treasury's Northern Campus in Darlington.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Darlington economic campus is an important part of the government's wider Places for Growth programme, which aims to move 22,000 Civil Servants out of London by 2030. HM Treasury will be filling roles in the Darlington economic campus through both voluntary relocation and direct recruitment. The new office will include a range of roles and levels of seniority. The mixture of voluntary relocation and direct recruitment, and the exact nature of the roles, will be determined in due course.

■ Treasury: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[\[167284\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many officials in (a) his private office and (b) the wider Department have been allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

Kemi Badenoch:

There are no officials in private office allocated to the production and promotion of online content. The digital capability in communications team is not wholly devoted to social media but also deals with content production for other purposes such as design and photography. With that caveat the number of civil servants for whom this is a part of their role for the relevant years is:

2018-19: 4

2019-20: 5

2020-21: 6 (and 1 vacancy)

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Gender Recognition: Equality

Apsana Begum:

[\[166578\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what meetings she has had to discuss trans rights with organisations that have specific services supporting trans people.

Kemi Badenoch:

We want transgender people to be free to live and to prosper in modern Britain. Myself and the Equality Hub Ministerial team on equality issues engage with a range of organisations and stakeholders who support LGBT people and have specific services supporting trans people, including most recently Stonewall, UK Black Pride and the National LGBT Health Adviser, Dr Michael Brady.

Officials in the Government Equalities Office also engage broadly with interested parties, feeding the insights gathered into policy advice. They regularly meet with LGBT organisations, for example most recently Galop and the LGBT Foundation, as well as devolved administrations and the National LGBT Health Advisor to discuss trans rights, amongst other issues.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[167240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints have been lodged with the Health and Safety Executive pertaining to employees being asked to

return to a workplace during the third covid-19 national lockdown; and how that number compares with such complaints in the previous two national lockdowns.

Mims Davies:

Data pertaining specifically to employees being asked to return to a workplace during the pandemic is not captured in the complaints (or 'workplace concerns') submitted to the Health and Safety Executive. Data captured for Covid related complaints pertains to social distancing, personal protective equipment (PPE), general complaints (where these are not social distancing or PPE related) and unknown complaints (where multiple issues are disclosed and the categories are too narrow to describe the complaint fully).

■ **Events Industry: Kickstart Scheme**

Justin Madders: [\[167244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with representatives of the live events sector on the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Ministers and officials in the Department for Work and Pensions are engaging with employers, representative bodies and organisations from all parts of the economy to ensure that there is a rich mix of jobs made available through the Kickstart Scheme. This includes discussions with the creative arts and media industries, encouraging them to participate in the scheme.

■ **Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus**

Justin Madders: [\[167239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many covid-19 related complaints the Health and Safety Executive has received in each month since March 2020; and what proportion of those complaints resulted in (a) investigation, (b) improvement notices and (c) fines .

Mims Davies:

Since March 2020, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has received 21752 complaints (or 'workplace concerns') relating to Covid-19. Of these, 6240 - assessed as being higher risk - were assigned to regulatory operational staff for investigation.* The remainder were dealt with by HSE's Concerns and Advice Team. The breakdown is provided in the table below.

HSE does not have the power to issue fines. However, where a defendant is convicted of breaching health and safety at work law, the court may impose sanctions including fines, imprisonment and disqualification for directors. HSE will recover its costs where material breaches of health and safety at work law are identified.

MONTH / YEAR	TOTAL COVID-19 CONCERNS	NUMBER INVESTIGATED* BY REGULATORY OPERATIONAL STAFF (% OF TOTAL CONCERNS)				NUMBER RESULTING IN FORMAL WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE	NUMBER RESULTING IN IMPROVEMENT NOTICES
		TOTAL CONCERNS	NUMBER RESULTING IN VERBAL ADVICE	NUMBER RESULTING IN FORMAL WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE	NUMBER RESULTING IN IMPROVEMENT NOTICES		
March 2020	331	-	-	-	-	-	-
April 2020	3721	1717 (46%)	411	46		1	
May 2020	2060	987 (48%)	273	42		8	
June 2020	1247	552 (44%)	147	38		10	
July 2020	1269	397 (31%)	128	41		4	
August 2020	1016	302 (30%)	75	23		4	
September 2020	1154	413 (36%)	124	40		6	
October 2020	1520	498 (33%)	172	33		1	
November 2020	2347	502 (21%)	167	41		2	
December 2020	1203	248 (21%)	59	20		0	
January 2021	3116	458 (15%)	144	33		3	
February 2021	1587	150 (9%)	55	14		1	
March 2021	191	16 (8%)	7	1		0	
Totals	21752	6240 (29%)	1762	372		40	

* The figures relate to concern investigations only and do not include investigations carried out in response to reports received under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Note: Figures were obtained from HSE's live operational database on 12th March 2021 and are subject to change, e.g. as there can be a delay of up to ten working days before data is uploaded to the system.

■ Jobseeker's Allowance: Benefits Rules

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[165524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions her Department has had with representatives of trade unions on the reintroduction of a full sanction and conditionality regime for claimants of jobseeker's allowance; and what the timeframe is for recommencing that regime.

Mims Davies:

The department re-introduced Claimant Commitments for New Style and Legacy claims from 3 August 2020. We are reintroducing Claimant Commitments for existing claims on a phased approach as capacity allows.

We expect claimants on work-related benefits to undertake certain activities in return for financial support through the benefit system. These requirements are agreed and tailored to help the claimant prepare for, look for and move into work.

Work Coaches will ensure that commitments made by claimants are reasonable. They will also allow claimants to continue to adhere to local and national public health advice in regards to Covid-19, whilst also doing what they can to engage with the labour market.

No consultation was required as there was no change in policy.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Justin Madders:

[\[167247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has published on advertising jobs via the Kickstarter scheme; and how long vacancies should be advertised for.

Mims Davies:

Once an application to the Department of Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme has been approved, along with their grant agreement, the gateway or employer receives the necessary documentation and guidance to create their job advert, that will be uploaded onto the Universal Credit system and made visible only to DWP staff. Young people are then matched and referred to the Kickstart jobs by their Work Coach who supports them in selecting and applying for these jobs - including giving them access to the vacancy information.

The length of time a job is advertised is flexible to meet the employer's needs, including how many referrals they would like and how long the vacancy will be live for. General information is available on gov.uk.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Applications

Seema Malhotra:

[\[167867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average number of applications is from eligible young people for each Kickstart placement.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 17 March 2021]: Data regarding the average number of applications from eligible young people for each Kickstart job is not available.

Kickstart Scheme: Staff**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[165526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will provide a breakdown of from where officials in her Department have been moved in order to staff the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Members of staff have been redeployed to support the Kickstart Scheme from all parts of the Department for different periods of time. We currently have over 400 staff working to process applications to the scheme. This resource picture changes according to demand and as members of staff return to their previous roles.

Kickstart Scheme: Training**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[165525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what training has been provided to staff working on the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Modular learning products have been delivered to support each stage of the Kickstart process, from applications through to employer payments. All products are designed to work as either self-learning or facilitated material and are supported by additional workplace learning - detailed guidance is also provided through the gov.uk Kickstart webpages.

Means-tested Benefits**Ian Mearns:**[\[167854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what calculation is used to determine the appropriate capital threshold limits for welfare benefits which are means tested and which are not payable in the event that a claimant holds savings or capital above the set threshold.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 17 March 2021]: The capital thresholds strike a balance between protecting less well-off people and the taxpayer, whilst at the same time recognising the conscientious efforts of people who have built up capital. This limit also ensures that the help which comes from taxpayers, many of whom are themselves on low incomes and have limited capital, is directed to people who need it most. Whilst it is important to encourage saving, it has never been thought right for substantial amounts of capital to be ignored, therefore it is also reasonable that there should be a capital limit above which benefits are not available. The current system allows people

to continue to receive benefit even though they may have an amount of capital, by gradually reducing the level of their entitlement.

■ Poverty

Jon Trickett: [166324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the findings of research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which states that 56% of people in poverty are in a working family, compared to 39% 20 years ago.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

■ Sick Pay

Vicky Foxcroft: [166492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data the Government holds on the number and proportion of (a) employers who have paid and (b) employees who have received (i) statutory sick pay and (ii) occupational sick pay in the most recent period for which that information is available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The first link refers to the 2018 employer survey (which tells us what % of employers pay what sick pay), second link refers to the 2014 employee survey (which tells us what % of employee are paid what sick pay).

Employer Survey interim report:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810840/interim-report-sickness-absence-and-health-in-the-workplace.pdf

Employee survey:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447127/rr901-health-and-wellbeing-at-work.pdf

■ Unemployed People: Adult Education

Seema Malhotra: [167865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many adults seeking to upskill have been referred by work coaches to adult education courses in each of the last 12 months; and what assessment her Department has made of the effect of undertaking adult education courses on employment outcomes for unemployed adults seeking work.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 17 March 2021]: Information relating to the number of adults seeking to upskill that have been referred by Work Coaches to adult education courses in each of the last 12 months is not centrally collated by DWP.

There has not been a formal DWP assessment of the effect of undertaking adult education courses on employment outcomes for unemployed adults seeking work.

■ **Universal Credit**

Jonathan Reynolds:

[165523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many easements were approved for universal credit between March 2020 and July 2020.

Will Quince:

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department introduced a number of national policy easements for Universal Credit, which applied to all claimants.

With effect from March 2020 and until the end of June 2020, we suspended the requirements to attend appointments, undertake work preparation and work search and to be available for work for all UC claimants.

At the same time, the Department also adopted a socially distanced approach to identity verification (online verification, where possible), removed the Gainfully Self-Employed test, suspended the Minimum Income Floor and suspended all face-to-face Work Capability Assessments. These measures are currently still in place.

With effect from March 2020, claimants were not required to provide fit notes in person or by post to evidence their health condition. This measure became permanently incorporated into our business-as-usual practice from 23rd November 2020.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Notification to Parliament of a Contingent Liability: Indemnification to CGI IT UK Ltd**

UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency and Minister of State (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth) (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS854\]](#)

1) In line with our emergency response for nuclear incidents obligations, my Department has been developing a new software application to support the management of nuclear emergencies. The new system will replace two ageing legacy systems managed by BEIS and MOD.

2) My Department is procuring Application Management and Support (AMS) services presently. We intend to indemnify the selected supplier in respect of liabilities that they may incur if employees of the former supplier of these services bring employment law claims against them in relation to the application of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE).

3) In relation to this, I have today laid before Parliament a Departmental Minute giving notice of the Department incurring this contingent liability in the form of indemnity protection provided to the selected supplier.

4) We believe it is appropriate to incur this contingent liability, to ensure that the new software system can go live without any delay. We consider the provision of this liability as the best value for money option to ensure the new service is available.

■ **Post Office Update**

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS853\]](#)

Problems with the Post Office's Horizon IT System have affected the lives and livelihoods of many postmasters.

Over the years, the Horizon accounting system recorded shortfalls in cash in branches. The Post Office at the time thought that some of these were caused by postmasters, and this led to dismissals, recovery of losses by POL and, in some instances, criminal prosecutions.

A group of 555 of these postmasters, led by former postmaster Alan Bates, brought a group litigation claim against the Post Office in 2016. It is clear from the findings of Mr Justice Fraser, just how wrong Post Office was in its relationship with postmasters and that there were clear failings with the Horizon system.

The Government pays tribute to those postmasters and colleagues across the House who continue to shine a spotlight on such an important issue.

The Post Office reached a full and final settlement with claimants in the group litigation in December 2019 and apologised for its past failings. That settlement was an important step towards addressing the wrongs of the past, but it was only the start of a long journey for the Post Office to repair and strengthen the relationship with postmasters.

As part of the settlement the Post Office agreed to set up the Historical Shortfall Scheme. The Scheme was open to current and former postmasters who did not participate in the group litigation claim against Post Office and did not have a criminal conviction, but who may have experienced and repaid Horizon shortfalls. It is therefore an important step in making sure that all those who were affected have the opportunity to seek resolution.

The Scheme closed in August 2020 and received over 2,400 applications. This number was higher than the Post Office had anticipated when the Scheme was established. All of these applications of course need to be properly assessed.

The Post Office is committed to the successful delivery and timely completion of the Historical Shortfall Scheme. However, the cost of the Scheme is beyond what the business can afford.

The Government will therefore provide sufficient financial support to Post Office to ensure that the Scheme can proceed, based on current expectations of the likely cost. The BEIS Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is providing this support in his capacity as sole shareholder in the Post Office.

There are two reasons this is being done.

First, we must ensure that those postmasters who have applied to this scheme are able to seek redress. By supporting the Scheme, we will make it possible for these postmasters to be fairly compensated.

Second, we must protect the post office network. As we have seen through the pandemic, it provides essential services to citizens across the country.

Without this support the Post Office would be unable to deliver fully the Historical Shortfall Scheme and it would be unable to continue to operate its network as we know it today. This is a critical intervention that benefits current and former postmasters and the millions of customers that rely on their local post office branch.

The final cost of delivering the Historical Shortfall Scheme will be determined over the coming months, including through the work of an Independent Panel. This support will ensure that postmasters are appropriately compensated, however we will not spend more of taxpayer's money than is necessary to ensure the Scheme meets its objectives.

The Post Office is rightly contributing what it can from its own resources to the delivery of the Scheme.

While it is important that the Scheme remains independent of Government it is also important that this shareholder support delivers Value for Money. The Government is confident that the controls in place in the design of the Historical Shortfall Scheme will make sure this is the case.

The Post Office will make the first offers to applicants shortly. However, given the number of applications it will take time to work through all the claims that Post Office has received. The Government would therefore like to thank postmasters in advance for their patience and reassure them that their claims will be properly handled.

The Horizon dispute has affected the lives of too many people and supporting the Scheme operated by Post Office will help them right the wrongs of the past.

We must also ensure that a situation like this can never be allowed to occur again. That is why this Government has asked Sir Wyn Williams to lead the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Sir Wyn's Inquiry will work to fully understand what happened, gather available evidence and ensure lessons have been learnt so that this cannot occur again. It will also look specifically at whether the Historical Shortfall Scheme is being properly delivered. The Government looks forward to receiving Sir Wyn's report in the Summer.

■ Publication of Audit and Corporate Governance Reforms

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng):
[\[HCWS852\]](#)

Today the Government is publishing its ambitious plans to strengthen the UK's audit, company reporting and corporate governance framework, "Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance", which I will lay in the House. These proposals will ensure the UK's markets are at the cutting edge of global best practice.

British business is built on trust, so it is vital that our leading companies can command the confidence of the financial markets, investment community and wider public as the UK recovers from the effects of Covid-19. Our comprehensive package of reforms will strengthen reporting, audit and governance in the UK's largest companies. The proposals will help cement the UK's position as a world-leading destination for investment by helping to ensure that our leading companies are governed responsibly and that investors, creditors, workers and others have access to the information they need.

Our proposals respond to the independent reviews led by Sir John Kingman, Sir Donald Brydon and the Competition and Markets Authority, and I would like to thank each of them for their valuable contributions. Today's publication sets out a balanced and wide-ranging package of reforms which will lay the foundations for British companies to build back stronger as the UK recovers from the effects of Covid-19 and in the wake of recent corporate failures. Restoring business confidence, but also people's confidence in business, is crucial to repairing our economy and building back better from the pandemic.

In particular, the Government's proposals include:

- supporting directors of large companies in planning for long-term success through annual resilience statements: setting out how they are mitigating short and long-term risks, for the benefit not only of shareholders but also of local communities, suppliers, customers and the wider UK economy.

- making directors of the country's biggest companies more accountable when they breach their duties, with the prospect of fines or bans only when there are serious failings, such as misleading accounts or hiding information from auditors. This measure is targeted at the very largest companies in the UK, not start-ups and small businesses, and would not affect the vast majority of directors. Instead, it reflects the level of responsibility that comes with a board position in the largest companies.
- addressing "rewards for failure" through mechanisms to claw bonuses back following misconduct or management failures;
- measures to unleash competition and strengthen governance in the audit market, overseen by a new regulator, to increase choice and drive up resilience;
- recognising the economic importance of the largest privately-owned companies by ensuring they meet the highest governance and reporting standards;
- making company reporting more transparent and informative: so that they pay out dividends only when they have sufficient reserves, and enabling companies to have a wider range of metrics audited, for example climate disclosures.

These proposals will all be backed by the creation of a strong and independent statutory authority for audit, corporate reporting and governance. Replacing the Financial Reporting Council, the new regulator will be given much stronger powers to enforce standards. We also propose that it will have the power to impose an operational split between the audit and non-audit functions of accountancy firms, to reduce the risk of any conflicts of interest that may affect the standard of audit they provide.

The UK is consistently placed as one of the leading destinations for foreign investment in Europe and around the world. These reforms will sustain and build on the UK's position, and reinforce the Government's wider work to ensure the UK remains a world-class destination for investment.

The reforms cover the whole of the UK since, although company law is devolved in Northern Ireland, to date the Northern Ireland Executive has preferred to align with Great Britain in this area. The Government will also continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations in Wales and Scotland in developing the final provisions.

In light of the challenging circumstances for companies, the Government's consultation period will run for 16 weeks. The Government then intends to bring forward legislation when Parliamentary time allows. We will implement reforms in a proportionate way that does not prove burdensome to business, for example considering a limited exemption for newly listed firms from the new requirements.

I will place a copy of the three supplementary publications, including an Impact Assessment of the proposed measures, in the Libraries of both Houses.

CABINET OFFICE**■ The European Union (Withdrawal) Act & Common Frameworks Report****Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith):****[\[HCWS857\]](#)**

I am today laying before Parliament a report, 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 September 2020 to 25 December 2020'. I am laying this report because it is a legal requirement under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 for quarterly reports to be made to Parliament on the progress of the work to develop Common Frameworks. The report is available on GOV.UK and details the progress made between the UK Government and devolved administrations regarding the development of Common Frameworks. This report details progress made during the tenth 3-month reporting period, and sets out that no 'freezing' regulations have been brought forward under section 12 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act. A copy of the 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 September 2020 to 25 December 2020' report has been placed in the libraries of both Houses. The publication of the report reflects the Government's continued commitment to transparency.

COP26**■ COP26 Update****COP26 President-Designate (Alok Sharma):****[\[HCWS858\]](#)**

Statement

Following the creation of a full-time COP26 President role, I wanted to update the House on the governance, structure and parliamentary accountability of the role.

COP26 is a UN conference hosted by the UK, in partnership with Italy, which will be held in Glasgow in November 2021. World leaders will attend the conference, with the aim to agree how to tackle the threat of global climate change and deliver a resilient, net zero economy that protects and values the natural world.

The UK is a world leader on climate change. We were the first major economy to legislate for net zero by 2050. In November 2020, the Prime Minister set out our new Nationally Determined Contribution, committing to reduce our emissions by at least 68% by 2030 on a 1990 baseline, and in December 2020 we published the UK's first Adaptation Communication.

Ministerial team

The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith, Minister for Pacific and the Environment, will be the COP26 spokesperson in the House of Lords. The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth, will also address COP26 questions in the House of Commons and is the UK International Champion on Adaptation and

Resilience for the COP26 Presidency. Katherine Fletcher MP has been appointed as my Parliamentary Private Secretary.

Role of UN COP President

The COP President-Designate is responsible within the UK for delivering the COP26 summit in Glasgow. Ahead of the summit I am engaging with the UNFCCC Secretariat and the current COP President as they prepare the provisional negotiations agenda. I am working to increase ambition internationally, developing effective international relationships with countries, institutions, businesses and stakeholders to achieve the necessary commitments in advance of and at COP. I am regularly engaging with the members of the UNFCCC to understand their positions and work with them to reach consensus on the negotiations. I will continue my close engagement with a large number of civil society actors as we seek to deliver an inclusive COP.

With the will of all Parties, I will formally become COP President during the opening ceremony of the Glasgow Summit. At the summit, I will participate as COP President, under the authority of the COP and its 197 parties. I will lead the formal negotiations, preside over meetings and will facilitate proceedings in accordance with the COP's draft Rules of Procedure. I will have oversight of the overall package of outcomes and will work closely with UNFCCC members to secure consensus. As COP President I will also lead the COP Bureau, which is an 11-member body that assists the President and supports the work of COP, for the duration of my term until COP27 in late 2022.

The Prime Minister has made the role full time and as a full member of the Cabinet. My Cabinet colleagues remain responsible for delivering on their respective policy responsibilities.

Delivering a successful outcome

At the Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December 2020, I set out four clear objectives for the UK Presidency.

1. To ask countries to commit to net zero by mid-century, building on the 70% of world GDP covered by net zero targets today. To set the path to this, countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets (known as NDCs) which align with net zero goals. We will also be looking to accelerate the phase-out of coal, encourage investment in renewables, halt fossil fuel subsidies and pick up the pace on electric vehicle roll out. All of these areas are critical to stop average global temperatures exceeding 1.5C.
2. To urgently protect and help adapt our communities and natural habitats from the destructive effects of climate change. This will involve enabling and encouraging countries affected by climate change to build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure to avoid loss of homes and livelihoods.
3. To increase funding to support these aims, making good on the \$100bn annual climate finance goal affirmed through the Paris Agreement. We need to be in a position to unleash the trillions in private and public finance to meet global net zero.

4. To close off the outstanding elements of the Paris Rulebook, and accelerate delivery of the Paris Goals through collaboration between Governments, Businesses and Civil Society.

We will deliver these objectives through a major international engagement programme. I have briefed all UN Member States three times and have personally engaged with over 50 countries. In the last month I have visited Ethiopia, Gabon, Egypt, Nigeria, India, Nepal, Belgium and France, and have spoken to representatives from a wide range of other countries and organisations, including the United States and China and hosted virtual roundtables and engaged with civil society groups.

Parliamentary scrutiny and engagement

There will be regular Oral Questions, which commenced on 24 February. And written questions can be submitted to the COP26 President.

There will be full select committee scrutiny of the role. A BEIS Select Committee session was held on 19 January. The Chairs of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Environmental Audit, Science and Technology, Foreign Affairs, International Development, Treasury, Transport, Scottish Affairs, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Liaison Committees have come together informally as a 'Committee on COP26' which is an initiative I welcome and am committed to appearing in front of them alongside my ministerial colleagues, who will also be able to answer questions on their respective policy responsibilities.

My ministerial team and I will send a regular newsletter to colleagues in both Houses. I have agreed a programme of engagement activity with the Chairs of the Climate All-Party Parliamentary Groups.

We will be providing a digital toolkit to members in due course to support them to engage constituents in the Together for Our Planet campaign. We will also be working with partners to engage schools in COP26, including providing a tailored toolkit.

A range of opportunities are available for members and their constituents to get involved at COP26 itself. These include hosting events, creative installations and exhibitions within UK Government managed spaces.

We also expect there will be a range of fringe events and activities across the city of Glasgow and throughout the UK organised by stakeholders, civil society organisations and businesses.

Domestic and Devolved Administration engagement

We are working with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure an inclusive and ambitious summit for the whole of the UK. All parts of the UK will have important roles to play in ensuring the summit's success.

I have invited climate change Ministers from the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to participate in a regular Devolved Administrations Group to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 in support of the delivery of an inclusive and welcoming COP26 representative of the whole of the UK.

I also chair the COP26 UK Mayors' and Regions Advisory Council with mayors and council leaders from across the UK, including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. In addition to ongoing engagement with stakeholders across the UK, to ensure an inclusive, whole of society COP26, that is representative of all of the UK in Glasgow.

We have launched the Together for our Planet campaign which will raise awareness and understanding of COP26 and the work the UK is doing to combat climate change. The campaign aims to drive awareness and create opportunities for people across the UK to participate in the run-up to COP26.

COP Unit governance

The Prime Minister chairs the Climate Action Strategy Cabinet Committee (CAS), which determines the UK's overarching climate strategy both domestically and internationally. I continue to chair the Climate Action Implementation Cabinet Committee (CAI), which supports the CAS to operationalise the Government's climate strategy.

I am supported by the COP26 Unit which has over 200 posts and is based in the Cabinet Office. The COP Unit team brings together civil servants from across Whitehall and external expertise. International engagement, coordinated by the COP26 team in cooperation with the FCDO, takes place across all Departments and by all Ministers with an interest in the cross-cutting campaigns and our COP objectives, as well as by the Prime Minister.

As set out above, the regular processes are in place to ensure parliamentary scrutiny and support towards delivery of COP26.

Progress so far

1. *Reducing emissions:* countries representing around 65% of global CO₂ emissions and around 70% of the world's economy have now committed to reaching net zero emissions or carbon neutrality. When the UK took the role of incoming COP Presidency in December 2019, coverage was just 20% of global emissions and 26% of world GDP. On 12th December, over 90 countries, businesses, sectors, cities, including 75 world leaders, attended the Climate Ambition Summit, co-hosted with the UN and France in partnership with Italy and Chile. At the summit 45 leaders highlighted plans for new and more ambitious NDCs (covering 71 countries including all EU member states) and 24 countries announced new commitments, strategies or plans to reach net zero or carbon neutrality. The Summit delivered real steps forward - for example Colombia committed to an impressive 51% emissions reduction target; and Pakistan announced a moratorium on new coal plants.

2. *On helping protect communities and natural habitats from the impact of climate change:* at the CAS, 20 countries put forward plans for protecting their economies and communities from the impact of climate change. On 25 January we launched the Adaptation Action Coalition to bring together countries to identify the solutions, technologies and resources needed to protect people and nature as the planet warms. Action on nature is at the heart of our COP Presidency. At the UN General Assembly in September 2020 the Prime Minister signed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature committing leaders to take ten urgent actions to put nature on a path to recovery by 2030. The UK played a key role in pioneering and negotiating the Pledge, and which now has over 80 countries signed up. On 2 February 2021 we launched the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, which will bring together key countries exporting agricultural products and the countries consuming these products to agree global principles and a roadmap of actions to make global supply chains process greener and more sustainable, tackling one of the primary drivers of nature loss.
3. *On increasing climate finance:* there is an urgent need to get more finance flowing to support swift climate action. Developed countries must meet and surpass the \$100bn of climate finance commitment, matching UK ambition to double UK ICF to at least £11.6 billion between 2021 and 2025. Private finance is also key. So far we have seen major asset owners, representing over \$5 trillion, and asset managers, representing over \$9 trillion, commit to net zero targets by 2050. Climate-related Financial Disclosures are increasing and jurisdictions in Brazil, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Switzerland are disclosure taking action to make mandatory, complementing the UK's announcement for a pathway to mandatory disclosure across the economy by 2025.
4. *On making progress on the outstanding elements of the Paris Rulebook, and accelerating delivery of the Paris Goals:* we have been convening UNFCCC members in discussions to lay the groundwork for the negotiations, and we will be hosting, alongside Chile, a series of monthly multilateral consultations. More broadly, we have built partnerships to increase international collaboration on key issues, establishing the Energy Transition Council and Zero Emissions Vehicles Transition Council, as well as working through existing coalitions: the Powering Past Coal Alliance has grown to 114 members covering 20% of OECD coal power capacity.

I look forward to engaging with you and continuing to update you over the coming months on the road to COP26.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Independent Review into Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation orders during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): [\[HCWS859\]](#)

The Government is announcing today the publication of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) report into the use of Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to firstly thank the CQC for their swift work on the review, as well as the people, their families, representatives and staff who shared their experiences on such an important and complex issue. A copy of the report is available [[link](#)].

The report follows concerns raised at the beginning of the pandemic around the use of “blanket” DNACPR decisions across groups of people, particularly our most vulnerable. The Care Quality Commission has investigated these concerns.

Sensitive and well communicated DNACPR decisions can be an important part of patient care and end of life experience. It is essential therefore, that good practice is embedded across the health and care system to build understanding of the role good DNACPR decisions play in high quality personalised care.

We are pleased to see the numerous examples of good practice, across both health and social care settings highlighted by the report. We heard about experiences of people and their families seeing health and care providers go above and beyond to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic.

However, such good practice was not true everywhere. The report tells the stories of people who were denied the opportunity to discuss their DNACPR decisions, as well as families and carers feeling unable to support their loved ones or challenge DNACPR decisions. This is completely unacceptable.

Inappropriate or “blanket” application of DNACPRs decisions are wholly unacceptable, even in pressurised circumstances. All decisions about DNACPR must, in all circumstances, be made on an individual basis according to need.

We must be able to ensure that people feel equal partners in their care and that staff across all care settings feel well equipped to hold these difficult conversations. We must have processes to ensure that people feel supported to speak up when they have concerns. We support the recommendations of the CQC, including ensuring that staff have the training needed to be able to support people with DNACPR decisions; that there is national guidance and system level oversight; and, that people are well informed of what good practice looks like, what their rights are and for DNACPR decisions to be considered as part of good end of life care.

The Government is determined to tackle bad practice and welcome the report’s recommendation for a Ministerial Oversight Group to drive progress on this important issue. We are committed to driving forward the delivery of these recommendations and ultimately ensure everyone experiences the compassionate care they deserve.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Publication of the 3rd Annual Report of the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group**

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse):

[\[HCWS856\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce the publication of the 3rd annual report of the Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group on 18 March 2021. The Group provides Ministers with independent advice on matters relating to ethical issues in forensic science and biometrics and considers issues in data ethics.

I would like to thank the Group for their advice concerning the use and retention of biometric identifiers and for their advice on the development and testing of biometric technologies.

The group have provided advice and guidance on issues such as; retention of additional DNA profile information on the National DNA Database, and a trial on the use of near match reporting; consideration of the ethical issues in genetic genealogy and massively parallel sequencing approaches for criminal investigations; and recommendations for leaflets to inform the public on issues relating to burial at sea and deletion of custody images.

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group annual report can be viewed on the website of the Group at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/biometrics-and-forensics-ethics-group> and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Refugee Protection and Integration

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): **[HCWS855]**

Global Britain has a proud record of helping those fleeing persecution, oppression or tyranny from around the world. In addition to providing £10 billion each year to support people in need through overseas aid, the UK is a global leader in refugee resettlement. Between 2016 and 2019 we resettled more refugees from outside Europe than any EU member state.

In 2015, we committed to resettle 20,000 of the most vulnerable refugees who fled the brutal conflict in Syria through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). This included people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk.

Today we are delighted to be able to confirm that we have now met that commitment. We have resettled 20,080 vulnerable refugees across the UK since September 2015.

In total, this means across all Government-funded resettlement schemes, more than 25,000 refugees have been resettled in the UK over the past 6 years and around half of whom were children.

This achievement has been made possible thanks to the outstanding work and dedication of many partners including non-governmental organisations in the UK and international partners, community and faith groups, local authorities, devolved administrations and individual members of the public. I am truly grateful for this collaborative effort.

Resettlement is vital to safely and legally provide a path to settlement for vulnerable people fleeing persecution and it is right that we continue to offer safe pathways for those in need of protection. The launch of our new global UK Resettlement Scheme will now build on the success of previous schemes and we will continue our proud record of resettling refugees who need our help from around the world.

We want refugees in the UK to have the freedom to succeed and that means access to the tools they need to become fully independent, provide for themselves and their

families and the ability to contribute and integrate into the economic and cultural life of the UK.

That is why today I have also announced £14 million of funding to help newly-granted refugees to integrate in the UK. The £14 million fund will pilot new approaches across the country to support newly-granted refugees to learn English, move into work, access housing and build links in their local communities. Lessons learned from these pilots will inform future support available to all refugees.

This Government continues to step forward to provide help to those facing oppression or tyranny. This year we have also introduced a new pathway to citizenship for British National (Overseas) status holders and their family members who are facing draconian new security laws in Hong Kong which may see an estimated 320,000 people come to the UK over the next five years.

We have also enabled over 29,000 close relatives of refugees to join them in the UK through refugee family reunion in the last five years.

Looking ahead, as we reform the asylum system, Global Britain will continue its proud tradition of providing safe haven to those in need through safe and legal routes.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Rough sleeping update

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):

[[HCWS861](#)]

Today (18 March 2021), the Government is launching the next phase of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme. Councils across England are invited to bid for a share of funding totalling £212 million for 2021/22 to 2023/24 to deliver move-on homes for rough sleepers. These homes will be a national asset to support vulnerable people, and high-quality support services will be provided alongside to help vulnerable people move on from rough sleeping.

This funding is part of the £433 million Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme available over the lifetime of this parliament to deliver 6,000 new homes for rough sleepers, announced by the Government in May 2020. This represents the largest ever investment in move-on accommodation. Today's announcement builds on the first year of the programme, in which the Government allocated more than £150 million for move-on accommodation for rough sleepers, as well as investing in high-quality support over the next three years, so that vulnerable people helped through the programme can maintain their tenancies and move on from rough sleeping.

Further information on future years of the Programme is available in the fund's prospectus, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-accommodation-programme-2021-24>

The Government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head, which is why we have committed to end rough sleeping. That is also why, including this

programme, we have spent £700 million in 2020/21 and are spending over £750 million over the next financial year to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

This Programme builds on the Government's unprecedented Everyone In initiative, which has so far supported 37,000 individuals during the pandemic, with more than 26,000 already successfully moved on to longer-term accommodation. Together with our pledge to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act, this funding demonstrates our commitment to making the most of this opportunity to transform the lives of the some of the most vulnerable in society, and to ending rough sleeping for good.

TREASURY

■ Operation of the UK's Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen): [\[HCWS862\]](#)

Under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 (TAF 2010), the Treasury was required to prepare a quarterly report regarding its exercise of the powers conferred on it by Part 1 of TAF 2010. This written statement satisfies that requirement for the period 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

This report also covers the UK's implementation of the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida asset freezing regime (ISIL-AQ), and the operation of the EU's asset freezing regime under EU Regulation (EC) 2580/2001 concerning external terrorist threats to the EU (also referred to as the CP 931 regime).

Under the ISIL-AQ asset freezing regime, the UN has responsibility for designations and the Treasury, through the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (Asset-Freezing) Regulations 2011.

Under EU Regulation 2580/2001, the EU has responsibility for designations and while the UK was a member of the EU and throughout the Transition Period OFSI had responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under Part 1 of TAF 2010.

EU Regulation (2016/1686) was implemented on 22 September 2016. This permits the EU to make autonomous Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) listings.

UK Sanctions following the end of the Transition Period

Since the Transition Period ended at 11:00pm on 31 December 2020, the UK no longer applies EU sanctions regulations and all sanctions regimes will be implemented through UK regulations. The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (the Sanctions Act) provides the legal framework for the UK to impose, update and lift sanctions autonomously. Information on the three new Counter-Terrorism Sanctions regimes can be found via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-counter-terrorism-sanctions>

These new sanction regimes ensure that the UK implements its international obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and give effect to the UK's obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2368.

This is the final Quarterly Report to Parliament on the UK's Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime.

The attached tables set out the key asset-freezing activity in the UK during the quarter.

Attachments:

1. Counter-terrorist Asset Freezing Regime Q4 2020 [WMS Q4 of 2020 -Table.pdf]

■ **Transfer of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development contingent capital liability**

Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak):

[\[HCWS860\]](#)

I am today laying a Departmental Minute to advise that HM Treasury (HMT) intends – subject to the standard procedure for notification to Parliament of the assumption of contingent liabilities as described below – to transfer the contingent liability of £1,738,000,000 with respect to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

This transfer provides HMT with financial and accounting responsibility for the EBRD to match HMT's longstanding policy responsibilities. HMT is not incurring or undertaking a new contingent liability – the EBRD's standing contingent liability is swapping from the FCDO to the HMT balance sheet. This will not produce a net budget impact on either department's balance sheet as it is budget neutral and will appear as nil in the 2021/22 Main Estimates. The EBRD's shareholding is held by the UK Crown, meaning it is at HMG's discretion to determine which department holds the EBRD's callable liability.

The EBRD is a multilateral development bank (MDB) where HM Government (HMG) has an 8.52% capital shareholding. The Chancellor is UK Governor at the EBRD and the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Secretary, the UK Alternate Governor. The UK's overall capital contribution totals £2,300,000,000, of which previous payments have made up the 20% "paid-in" capital contribution requiring a cash transfer. The other 80%, £1,738,000,000, is "callable capital" – the EBRD has the right to call for payment for these shares if there is a crisis affecting the bank's assets or liabilities. No MDB has ever issued a call to payment on callable capital shares.

Although the EBRD has the right to call for payment of this callable capital incurred when the initial capital instalment was paid, no such instance has occurred in any MDB in the past. EBRD has a AAA credit rating, with a diversified portfolio of investments across a large range of countries. As of June 2020, the EBRD held €29.8 billion in equity (including shareholders' subscribed capital) and €11.6 billion in its reserves. Again, the transfer of the contingent liability from FCDO to HMT swaps the liability between balance sheets but does not incur or undertake further liabilities. If the liability were to be called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.