



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 19 March 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:43 P.M., 19 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

■ Conditions of Employment: Re-employment

Justin Madders:

[\[167237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, of 9 March 2021, Official Report, column 822, if he will publish the ACAS report on the use of fire and rehire practice.

Paul Scully:

The information gathered by Acas is a valuable source of information for Officials who are now giving this evidence through consideration. The Government will communicate its response in due course.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Sir David Evennett:

[\[167163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the hospitality sector of support provided by the Government since the start of 2021.

Paul Scully:

The Government has brought forward a substantial package of financial support for the hospitality sector since the start of the year. We keep these measures under close review and as a result my Rt hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in the Budget a £65 billion three-point plan to provide support for jobs and businesses (including the hospitality sector), with extensions to furlough, self-employed support, business grants, loans and VAT cuts – bringing total fiscal support to over £407 billion.

■ Parental Leave: Equality

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[167357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of equalising paternity and maternity leave rights.

Paul Scully:

In 2019, the Government consulted on high-level options and principles for reforming the parental leave and pay system to enable parents to balance the gender division of parental leave. We are currently assessing the responses to the consultation and intend to publish our response later this year.

We are also carrying out an evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme which was introduced in 2015. The scheme challenges the assumption that

the mother will always be the primary carer and enables eligible working parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay in the first year of their child's life. As part of this evaluation, we have undertaken a large-scale representative survey which sought views from over 3,000 parents on parental leave and entitlements. We are currently processing and analysing the data that we have collected and intend to publish our findings later this year, alongside the response to the consultation.

■ Small Businesses: Greater London

Sir David Evennett:

[\[167162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of small businesses that have closed in (a) Greater London, (b) Bexley Borough and (c) the Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency in each of the last five years.

Paul Scully:

Data on business closures by size of business are not available. The data provided in the table below cover all registered business closures for the years specified.

98.1% of all registered business are small (0 to 49 employees), according to the business counts published in 2020 by the Office for National Statistics in [UK business: activity, size and location](#), so the vast majority of business closures are very likely to be small businesses.

Where available, data on business closures for all registered businesses over the last 5 years for each of the 3 geographies are shown in the table below:

Table: Number of business closures, all registered businesses, 2016 to 2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Greater London	64,385	80,875	71,225	76,770	93,570*
Bexley Borough	1,025	1,380	1,220	995	**
Bexleyheath and Crayford Constituency	**	**	**	**	**

Sources:

Office for National Statistics ['Business Demography: 2019'](#)

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

* Data from Office for National Statistics ' [Business Demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK](#) '. This may not be directly comparable to other data in the table which comes from Office for National Statistics ' [Business Demography: 2019](#) '.

** No data available

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Kirsten Oswald:

[167234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, a) what assessment he has made of the extent to which financial support intended for disabled people, such as the Warm Home Discount, is reaching those who need it most and b) what action he has taken in response to this assessment.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Warm Home Discount is a key policy in the Government's programme to tackle fuel poverty and the effects of rising energy prices on low-income households. Launched in April 2011, it has helped over 2.2 million low-income and vulnerable households, including individuals with a disability, each year with their energy costs. However, we do not hold specific data about the number of disabled people receiving the Warm Home Discount.

In recognition of the positive and significant impact of the scheme, the [Energy White Paper 2020](#) committed to: extending the scheme to at least 2025/26; expanding the spending envelope from the current £351m to £475m (in 2020 prices) per year, to enable us to reach over 750,000 more households in, or at risk of, fuel poverty; and consulting later this year on reforms to the scheme from 2022 to better target fuel poverty. This will ensure that funds reach those most at risk and in deepest fuel poverty, including supporting the most vulnerable individuals with a disability. This is in line with our updated vulnerability principle included within the fuel poverty strategy ' [Sustainable Warmth](#) ', published in February 2021.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Jane Stevenson:

[157296]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy is on the use of non-pharmaceutical interventions to contain covid-19 infections after Step 4 of the Government's lockdown easing plan.

Penny Mordaunt:

On 22 February the Government published its ' [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021](#) ' roadmap to recovery.

As part of this, the government has committed to four reviews (large events, COVID-Certification, international travel and social distancing) to consider different non-

pharmaceutical interventions and how they might be utilised in the summer and beyond.

■ Government: Cost Effectiveness

Cherilyn Mackrory:

[140932]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government has taken since 2015 to reduce levels of (a) waste and (b) inefficiency across (i) Government and (ii) local Government.

Julia Lopez:

The Government is committed to finding efficient and effective ways of delivering public services. The Government announced steps to ensure efficient use of taxpayers' money in the 2020 Spending Review, including strengthening the government's approach to planning and delivery using the [Public Value Framework](#), changing the way the government invests in places to level up economic opportunity and improving the management of the government's capital portfolio.

In addition, the 2016 Local Government Finance Settlement offered Local Authorities the certainty of a four-year budget in return for publishing efficiency plans. This offer was overwhelmingly accepted by Councils, 97% of whom took up the offer in return for publishing efficiency plans.

■ Gyms: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[155122]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' document entitled Analysis of SARS-CoV-2 transmission clusters and superspreading events, dated 3 June 2020, what role the covid-19 superspreading event in South Korea in January 2020 played in informing the covid-19 restrictions applied by the Government to gyms.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government considers evidence from a range of sources when deciding whether and how to apply restrictions to businesses and when to ease them, including for gyms and other sports and leisure facilities. No one wants to prevent businesses operating, but we have always been guided by the scientific evidence whilst seeking to keep as many businesses open as possible at each stage of our response. Scientific evidence supporting the government response to COVID-19 is regularly published at - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

Gyms are currently closed as part of our national effort to control the spread of the virus. The government's published Roadmap sets out our intention to reopen gyms and other premises when the time is right and will be supported by updated Covid secure guidance before each step of the Roadmap.

■ Welsh Government: Coronavirus**Hywel Williams:** [\[165444\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates the UK and Welsh Governments held discussions on procurement of supplies and services relating to the covid-19 pandemic since 1 March 2020.

Julia Lopez:

The UK government has been committed to working closely with the devolved administrations and there have been regular discussions throughout the Covid response, including in relation to the procurement of supplies and services.

We have procured vaccines for the whole of the UK, and provided testing capacity to all of the Devolved Administrations, including operating testing sites across the UK. Mutual aid and cooperation across and between all four nations has been a key part of ensuring PPE gets to where it is needed.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**■ Church of England: Farms****Jim Shannon:** [\[168927\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what forums are available for the church to engage with its farm tenants on ideas for farm business development and environmental management of holdings.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 17 March 2021]: The Church Commissioners' rural portfolio is managed, day to day, by specialist rural agents who regularly engage with farm tenants, including farm visits, inspections and other forms of correspondence. During these discussions, the agents consider the tenants' farm businesses and, where relevant, the environmental practices on each holding. Our tenants are encouraged to approach our agents at their own discretion to discuss new ideas and strategies which they may seek to implement on the Commissioners' farms.

The Church Commissioners' asset managers and managing agents frequently meet (in person when allowed and virtually), at which point any strategic changes to farm businesses and environmental practices are discussed and considered with a view to wider strategic decision making and the objectives of the Commissioners. In addition, the Commissioners' asset management team typically carries out annual visits to estates and meets with tenants creating the opportunity to discuss any landlord and tenant matters directly.

Jim Shannon: [\[168928\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church takes to engage with the farm tenants on its

agricultural estate as part of its policies on ethical investment; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 17 March 2021]: The Church Commissioners' rural portfolio is managed day to day by specialist rural agents. The agents hold regular meetings with the Commissioners' farm tenants. The managing agents are aware of the Commissioners' ethical investment policies and, as and when appropriate, they engage with the Commissioners' tenants and asset managers regarding any ethical or other concerns.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Events Industry: Finance

Justin Madders:

[\[167251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing re-opening grants for the live events sector.

Caroline Dinenage:

We appreciate the important role that the live events sector plays in the UK's economy, and that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to this sector.

That is why we announced the unprecedented £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund in July 2020. This includes over £800 million to almost 3800 arts, culture and heritage organisations in England, helping to support at least 75,000 jobs. Additionally, the Chancellor announced in the 2021 Budget an additional £300 million to support theatres, museums and other cultural organisations in England through the Culture Recovery Fund. This extra funding, together with other cultural support such as funding for our national museums, means that our total support package for culture during the pandemic is now approaching £2 billion.

More generally, the Prime Minister has set out the Roadmap to reopening the Economy, and the Budget has set out a 'Restart Grant' of up to £18,000 to over 680,000 business premises, giving them the cash certainty they need to plan ahead and safely relaunch trading over the coming months. We are also providing all English local authorities with an additional £425 million of discretionary business grant funding, on top of the £1.6 billion already allocated. Altogether, this support will cost £5 billion. This brings the total cost of cash grants provided by the Government to £25 billion.

Members: Correspondence**Robert Largan:** [\[166608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak, dated 26 October 2020, referenced RL13783.

Nigel Huddleston:

A response was issued on 26 November 2020 under the case reference MC2020/23548/NB. A further copy of this response has since been issued to ensure receipt.

EDUCATION**Adult Education: Finance****Robert Halfon:** [\[167852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the use of Adult Education Budget funds by grant-funded adult education providers to deliver training and education.

Gillian Keegan:

We recognise the challenges that providers are facing as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and we fully appreciate the steps being taken to continue supporting learners to access high quality education and training. This includes quickly moving to remote learning and providing a wide range of brilliant high-quality, engaging classes.

We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), providing £1.34 billion in the 2020/21 academic year.

Currently, approximately 50% of the AEB is devolved to seven Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Mayor of London, acting where appropriate through the Greater London Authority (GLA). These authorities are now responsible for the provision of AEB-funded adult education for their residents and allocation of the AEB to providers. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for the remaining AEB in non-devolved areas.

In recognition that the 2019/20 academic year was challenging, we introduced a one off exceptional end of year reconciliation process for ESFA AEB grant funded providers which lowered the threshold for reconciliation in line with providers' average delivery of 68%.

In view of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, we are currently reviewing the end of year reconciliation position for the 2020/21 academic year. Any changes to the published arrangements will be communicated in due course.

For the 2020/21 academic year, we are also giving providers the opportunity to earn an additional 3% on top of their ESFA AEB allocation for over-delivery to support growth in adult skills participation.

In areas where the AEB has been devolved, MCAs and the GLA are responsible for assessing their providers' delivery levels and considering any flexibilities in their areas.

■ Department for Education: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[\[167277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

Nick Gibb:

There has been no-one in my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education's private office allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on Department for Education social media.

The number of officials in the central social media team based in the communications division are outlined by year in the following table:

YEAR:	NUMBER OF OFFICIALS:
2018-19	5
2019-20	7
2020-21	10

This reflects the increasing importance of communicating directly on social media to parents, students and school, college and university staff with clear, practical information and support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Disability: Children

Alex Cunningham:

[\[168904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to appoint a cross-Departmental Minister for Disabled Children; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

As the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families I am responsible for policy on special educational needs and disabilities and on disadvantaged children more broadly.

The government is committed to supporting disabled children and as part of this we will be publishing a new national strategy for disabled people this year. I work closely with my hon. Friend, the Member for North Swindon, as Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, and with Ministerial Disability Champions across Whitehall to

ensure that our policies are joined up effectively. Our priority here is ensuring that the needs of disabled children are recognised and appropriately met, which is what the current ministerial arrangements are already working to achieve.

■ Educational Visits and Outdoor Education: Coronavirus

David Warburton:

[167274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the Government's timescale is for allowing the (a) reopening of residential outdoor learning centres and (b) recommencement of residential school trips as covid-19 restrictions are eased; and what plans he has to provide additional financial support to residential outdoor learning centres.

Nick Gibb:

Schools are advised against all educational visits at this time. The Department is working on advice for schools 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 in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021>. The advice will be published shortly.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, businesses, business representative organisations, and the financial services sector to monitor the implementation of current support and understand whether there is additional need.

The Government would encourage businesses who are unable to access support, or who are unsure of the support available, to access free tailored advice through the Business Support Helpline, which can be accessed through the Business Support website at: www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline, or through local Growth Hubs in England: www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts. Businesses in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can access business support through the devolved Governments.

■ Pupil Premium

Neil Coyle:

[167217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the cost incurred by schools due to the decision to move the pupil premium eligibility date back from January 2021 to October 2020 by (a) Parliamentary constituency and (b) local authority area.

Nick Gibb:

Pupil premium funding for the financial year 2021-22 will be based on the October 2020 census data provided by local authorities and academies.

The Department will confirm pupil premium allocations for the financial year 2021-22 in June 2021.

Data on the number of pupils who have become eligible for free school meals since 2 October 2020 is currently being collected in the spring school census and is not yet available.

The Department publishes information on pupil financial premium allocations and the number of pupils eligible annually. The most recent publicly available figures can be found via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[167323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on the level of pupil premium funding for (a) mainstream and (b) SEN schools as a result of the new calculations of eligible pupils using the October 2020 census instead of the January 2021 census.

Nick Gibb:

The January 2021 census will be used to determine pupil premium eligibility for alternative provision and pupil referral units for the financial year 2021-22. Pupil premium eligibility for mainstream and special schools will be based on the October 2020 census. The Department will confirm pupil premium allocations for the financial year 2021-22 in June 2021. This will provide the public with information on the specific amounts that regions, local authorities and schools are receiving through the pupil premium for 2021-22.

Data on the number of pupils who have become eligible for free school meals since 2 October 2020 is currently being collected in the spring school census and is not yet available.

The Department publishes information on pupil premium allocations and the number of pupils eligible annually. The most recent publicly available figures can be found via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[167169]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that pupils who do not take covid-19 lateral flow tests continue to receive (a) good quality education and (b) face-to-face teaching.

Nick Gibb:

Testing is voluntary but is strongly recommended to all pupils who are eligible as this helps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 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.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[167335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether there is an exemptions from the requirement for children to attend school if they live with a parent who is clinically extremely vulnerable who is shielding during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

It is important that children attend school for their education, well-being, mental health and long-term development. School attendance is mandatory and children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable should still attend school. This position is informed by the latest medical evidence and has been agreed with the Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

The Department has asked schools to continue to implement a range of protective measures to ensure they are as safe as possible. Regular testing of children in schools will further reduce the risk of transmission. Most clinically extremely vulnerable adults will now have had at least one dose of the vaccine.

Where parents are anxious about their child's attendance, they should speak to their child's school about their concerns and discuss the protective measures that have been put in place to reduce the risk. They should also discuss other measures that can be put in place to ensure that their children can regularly attend school.

As usual, schools are also able, in exceptional circumstances, to grant leaves of absence to pupils. Schools should consider applications for leaves of absence from parents on an individual basis, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, and the relevant background context behind the request. Where leave is granted, we would expect this to be for a limited period of time and reviewed on a regular basis.

■ Pupils: Digital Technology

Chi Onwurah:

[\[168910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of digital exclusion on the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognised that a lack of digital access posed a risk to the efficacy of remote education. In response, we invested over £400 million to support access to remote education as an injection of support to minimise digital exclusion. To date, over 1.2 million laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools, academy trusts, local authorities and further education (FE) colleges. We have also provided support to over 100,000 families to get online by providing uplifts in mobile data and 4G wireless routers.

Until 8 March, the Department expected all primary schools, secondary schools and FE colleges in England to provide remote education for the majority of their pupils and students, with the exception of vulnerable children and young people and the

children of critical workers, who were able to attend school or FE colleges in person. Where vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers did not attend school or FE colleges, we expected schools and FE colleges to provide them with remote education.

During this period, we understood that some pupils may face difficulty engaging in remote education and may be considered to be vulnerable children and young people and therefore would have been eligible to attend on-site provision. It was for the child's school or local authority to make this decision. The decision would have been based on the needs of the child and their family, and a range of other factors, as set out in the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#vulnerable-children-and-young-people>.

As of 8 March, attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. However, 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 pupils and students continue to experience barriers to digital remote education, we expect schools and FE colleges to work to overcome these barriers. This could include distributing school or FE college-owned laptops or supplementing digital provision with different forms of remote education such as printed resources or textbooks. This should be supplemented with other forms of communication to keep pupils and students on track or answer questions about work. These expectations were also in place across the period of restricted attendance on-site.

The Department's research on lost learning has produced interim findings based on more than 400,000 Renaissance Learning reading and maths assessments taken in the first Autumn half-term of 2020-21.

The analysis uses historic test scores to predict what each pupil would have achieved on the test in Autumn 2020 had the COVID-19 disruption not occurred, based on that pupil's test score in the previous years. The difference between the actual Autumn 2020 score and their predicted score is an estimate of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak – presented here in terms of 'months of progress'.

- In reading Year 3-9 pupils are on average around 1.6-2 months behind where we would expect them to be in a 'normal' year.
- In maths Year 3-7 pupils are on average around 3.2 months behind.
- Results vary by geography – pupils in the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber are on average further behind than pupils in other regions.
- Pupils in High-FSM schools are on average further behind those in Low-FSM schools.

The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, measured using the disadvantage gap index, narrowed by 13% at Key Stage 2 and 9% at Key Stage 4 between 2011 and 2019.

Through our existing grant funding partnership with Nesta, the Department launched an evaluation programme in Autumn 2020, the EdTech R&D Programme, to understand the impact of technology use in education, particularly the impact and disparity between advantaged and disadvantaged students in attainment and outcomes during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The programme includes the evaluation of six remote education tools being used in schools and colleges in England. The first evaluation cycle is underway, with iterations throughout the life of the programme. A final report with key findings on using remote education tools effectively for all students, with particular recommendations for disadvantaged students, will also be shared with the wider sector by December 2021.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[168913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to develop a long-term post-covid-19 digital inclusion strategy for children and young people; and what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on tackling digital exclusion as part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Nick Gibb:

Technology in education has been essential for continuing to teach remotely during the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent school and college closures. In the long term, it has the potential to support teacher workload reductions, flexible working, cost savings, inclusive teaching practice and improved pupil outcomes.

The Government is investing over £400 million in support for remote education including making available over 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people. We have partnered with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help over 30,000 disadvantaged children get online as well as delivering over 70,000 4G wireless routers for pupils without connection at home.

We are building on the Department's significant investment in devices, platforms, training and digital services to create a lasting digital legacy.

Alongside this, ensuring that our children, regardless of their background, have world-class digital skills needed for the future, is a key priority of this Government. The computing curriculum, introduced in September 2014, aims to ensure that all pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4 can evaluate and apply information technology, including new or unfamiliar technologies, analytically to solve problems, and are responsible, competent, confident and creative users of information and communication technology. This sits alongside ensuring all pupils acquire knowledge of the fundamental principles of computer science and programming. All state-

maintained schools must teach the computing curriculum and academies and free schools may use it as an exemplar.

We continue to work with other Government departments, technology providers, charities, and foundations, to ensure vulnerable people access the support they need to benefit from digital connectivity. We want every adult to have a base level of digital and cyber skills so that no-one is left behind by the digital revolution.

■ Remote Education: ICT

Chi Onwurah:

[\[168911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which Department or organisation will be responsible for (a) assessing the number of children and young people who remain without access to an appropriate digital device, an internet connection and/or data after the roll-out of the Get Help with Technology scheme is complete and (b) tackling that gap.

Nick Gibb:

Ofcom runs an annual survey which publishes data on children's access to technology. This data informed the Department for Education's COVID-19 response through the Get Help with Technology programme.

The Department has invested over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care. We have secured 1.3 million laptops and tablets and have already delivered over 1.2 million of these to schools, colleges, academy trusts and local authorities, supporting disadvantaged children and young people who would not otherwise have access to a digital device.

Laptops and tablets are owned by schools, academy trusts, local authorities, or further education colleges who can lend these to the children and young people who need them most.

The Department has partnered with the UK's leading mobile network operators to provide free data to disadvantaged families, which will support access to education resources. Families will benefit from this additional data until July 2021.

We are working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to improve broadband connections in schools. DCMS has powers to address some affordability issues for some telecoms services.

We are building on the foundations of the Department's significant investment in technology and exploring future options, which we will set out in due course.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Caroline Lucas:

[\[169833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will introduce a minimum statutory requirement for Relationships and Sex Education provision to young people aged 16-19 including in college and university settings; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

Further Education and Higher Education Institutions are autonomous bodies, and as such it is for them to determine the type of course content and provision for students.

Sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies, and further education providers do not follow the national or basic curriculum, which goes up to age 16 only. Instead, all 16-19 year olds in school and further education follow study programmes which combine qualifications with other activities to help prepare students for adult life.

The statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) encourages post 16 settings to support students by offering RSHE subjects where appropriate. These settings may find the principles helpful, especially in supporting students in the transition to further education.

There is already a strong emphasis within the new inspection arrangements that Further Education, Skills providers and schools ensure that students and pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes requirements around the new RSHE subjects, and a new judgement on individual personal development. This is set out in Ofsted's Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook.

As part of the judgement on personal development, Ofsted will look at how providers support learners in "developing an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through appropriate relationship and sex education".

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Schools**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[167224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional educational resources to schools to encourage children and young people to engage with COP26.

Dr Lisa Cameron:[\[167226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to ensure children in primary and secondary schools are (a) educated on the sustainable development goals via the curriculum and (b) engaging with COP26.

Nick Gibb:

It is vital that pupils are taught about environmental and sustainability issues and the curriculum already includes much about these issues. From primary onwards, there is coverage of environmental issues in both the science and geography curriculums and, within both, there is scope for a practical focus to support pupils to apply the knowledge they are taught to the real world.

As the National Curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the Department expects schools to cover in each subject, teachers have the flexibility and freedom to determine how they deliver the content in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. Teachers can choose to cover particular subjects or topics in greater depth if they wish and, as knowledge of sustainability develops, teachers can adapt their school curriculums for these subjects.

To supplement their teaching, schools will have access to a variety of resources in the teaching of science and geography. The decision about which resources to use is a matter for schools and teachers.

The Department has made £4.84 million available for the Oak National Academy both for the summer term of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years, in order to provide video lessons in a broad range of subjects for Reception up to Year 11. These lessons and their accompanying resources include coverage of climate change and the environment.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[\[167278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 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.

Victoria Prentis:

At Defra, in 2020-21 we had 17 people allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media. Sixteen of those people worked across three organisations: Defra, Natural England and the Environment Agency. In 2018-19 we allocated 16 people and in 2019-20 we allocated 17 people.

We have no private office officials allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media.

Britain is fast becoming a digital-first nation. Roughly 96% of the UK households now have internet access with 66% of the population in the UK using social media. With this monumental shift in media consumption habits, it is essential for a responsible government to pivot its communications strategy to be more digital-first in order to inform and engage with the general public on important policies.

Government communication runs across all channels - TV and radio advertising, out of home, digital and social media, print, and direct channels such as letters, SMS and webinars, virtual and in-person activity, where needed and in full compliance with social distancing restrictions.

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. 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.

■ Fisheries: Marine Environment

Luke Pollard: [\[167310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of fishing with fly-shooting fishing gear in UK waters.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is considering the potential effects of fly-shooting fishing gear used by vessels in UK waters. Discussions with industry are taking place and any assessment of these activities will be based on evidence.

Luke Pollard: [\[167311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many UK vessels are permitted to fish using fly-shooting fishing gear.

Victoria Prentis:

From a total of 5,331 UK licensed fishing vessels, during 2021 so far 19 UK vessels have landed fish using Scottish seine gear (also known as fly-shooting gear).

Luke Pollard: [\[167312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many EU vessels are permitted to fish in UK waters with fly-shooting fishing gear.

Victoria Prentis:

From a total of 1,643 EU-27 vessels licensed to fish in UK waters, 25 EU vessels have Scottish seine gear (also known as fly-shooting gear) listed on the public EC fleet register. However, as vessels are not required to have a Scottish seine permit, there may be more vessels that use this type of gear in UK waters.

■ Fisheries: Protection

Luke Pollard: [\[167307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many hours of at sea surveillance for fisheries protection was deployed in English waters in January and February 2021; and what did the sea surveillance cost.

Victoria Prentis:

In January and February 2021, the Marine Management Organisation deployed 3372 hours of at-sea surveillance.

The total cost of surface surveillance was £1,111,977 in January and £1,050,472 in February.

■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software

Luke Pollard: [\[167313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, at what stage of development is the Catch App catch monitoring system.

Victoria Prentis:

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) led catch recording application currently remains in a 'public beta' phase, which includes a rollout of the service to the fishing sector. During this phase the MMO has published information, advice and guidance to provide support to all users. Current figures indicate over 80% of the active under 10 metre fleet have adopted the new recording method with over 80,000 catch records successfully submitted.

The MMO remains committed to continuous improvement based on feedback from stakeholders to improve the app's functionality and since launching the app this feedback has helped inform additional system improvements. This has included increasing the number of ports available within the app and the ability to record weights of fish lower than 1kg.

■ Fishing Catches: Dolphins**Luke Pollard:****[167317]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support he will make available to Plymouth fishing fleets to implement new measures to reduce porpoise and dolphin bycatch.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government funds Clean Catch UK which is a collaborative research programme dedicated to better monitoring, reducing, and, where possible, eliminating bycatch of sensitive species in UK fisheries. We are taking a risk-based approach to implementing this, focussing on fisheries which experience the highest rates of bycatch in the first instance.

Clean Catch UK is supported by a National Steering Group which provides advice to Defra on bycatch monitoring and mitigation. We would encourage representatives from Plymouth fishing fleets to engage in this group and to use the resources which can be found at <https://www.cleancatchuk.com/>.

■ Fishing Catches: Marine Environment**Luke Pollard:****[167314]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of bycatch on populations of (a) porpoises, (b) dolphins, (c) whales and (d) other sensitive species.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK government funds a comprehensive and well-respected bycatch monitoring programme which helps to protect sensitive marine species and to monitor and reduce any potential fisheries impacts on these species. The UK has an additional observer programme which collects data on fisheries catch and bycatch for scientific advice and management.

The government also funds Clean Catch UK which is a collaborative research programme dedicated to better monitoring, reducing, and, where possible, eliminating the bycatch of sensitive marine species in UK fisheries.

In addition, we also fund the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme, which conducts research on threats facing cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises and whales) through carrying out post-mortems on stranded animals. We are about to let a new 10-year contract for this programme, which demonstrates our long-term commitment to monitoring and mitigating such threats, including bycatch.

These programmes all contribute to the assessment of bycatch on populations of sensitive marine species.

Luke Pollard: [\[167315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the ecosystem objective under section 1(4) of the Fisheries Act 2020, what target is in place to minimise and eliminate bycatch of (i) porpoises, (ii) dolphins, (iii) whales and (iv) other sensitive species; what the timeframe is for meeting that target; and what steps the Government plans to take to reduce that bycatch.

Victoria Prentis:

We will set out policies that will help to achieve this objective in the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS, which is a UK-wide policy document).

The JFS will be published 24 months after the Fisheries Act received Royal Assent, in late 2022. We have also included provisions to report on the JFS policies every 3 years, and to review the JFS at least every 6 years, therefore ensuring the policies within it continue to deliver the objectives within the Fisheries Act.

Luke Pollard: [\[167316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to section 1(4) of the Fisheries Act 2020, what funding he has allocated from the public purse to deliver the (a) ecosystem objective on sensitive species bycatch and (b) Cetacean Bycatch Plan of Action.

Victoria Prentis:

This year we have spent £1,195,226 on activities which support more effective bycatch monitoring and mitigation, with a further £1,414,330 allocated for next year. These activities include projects and monitoring programmes which support delivery of the ecosystem objective on sensitive species bycatch and the Cetacean Bycatch Plan of Action.

■ Joint Unit for Waste Crime

Ruth Jones: [\[166557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

Ruth Jones: [\[166558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the effectiveness of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

Ruth Jones: [\[166559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the effectiveness of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

Ruth Jones: [\[166560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the effectiveness of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

Ruth Jones: [\[166561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effectiveness of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

Ruth Jones: [\[166562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Environment Agency's annual budget.

Rebecca Pow:

The Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC) celebrated its first anniversary in January. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic limiting some of its activities, it has delivered significant benefits in taking a UK-wide approach with its partners to tackle serious and organised criminality affecting the waste sector. Regulators from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are fully integrated into the Unit and are members of its Oversight Board and Defra is also represented. Defra officials hold discussions with colleagues in other Government departments as needed on tackling serious and organised crime in the waste sector.

In its first year, across the UK, it has led 28 multi-agency investigations and taken part in 34 days of action and raids with other partners, including the Metropolitan Police's largest ever armed raid. The Unit has developed intelligence links and sharing arrangements with a wide range of organisations in the public and private sectors including law enforcement agencies, infrastructure providers and the financial services sector. The coordination that has been brought to dealing with this aspect of serious criminality in society has proved its worth and helped law enforcement agencies arrest a number of suspects and disrupt criminal activity that damages the environment, the economy and communities.

The business planning round for 2021-22 included an assessment of the funding required by each of the department's arms-length bodies, including the Environment Agency, to deliver its priorities and statutory obligations.

■ Peat**Daisy Cooper:** [\[167325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on what date he will publish the England Peat Strategy.

Rebecca Pow:

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, we committed to publishing an England Peat Strategy to create and deliver a new ambitious framework for peat restoration in England, setting out our plan for the management, protection and restoration of our upland and lowland peatlands, so that they deliver benefits for climate and nature.

We will be setting out a package of measures to protect England's landscapes and deliver nature-based solutions this year.

■ Seafood**Luke Pollard:** [\[167305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many trucks carrying fresh seafood products to the EU left Great Britain in each month from January 2020 to February 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

Data on the number of lorries exporting seafood from the UK is not collected: freight flow data cannot be fully broken down by commodities carried for all routes of UK exports. We are, however, monitoring the number of vehicles who designate in their application for a Kent Access Permit (KAP), that they are transporting prioritised goods such as single loads of live and fresh seafood for human consumption, mixed consignments are not in scope for prioritisation. This only indicates the volumes travelling via the short straights. Although there are caveats to this data, primarily that all those transporting live or fresh seafood for human consumption have confirmed this in their application for a KAP, data indicates that there have been a higher weekly volume of vehicles transporting live or fresh seafood for human consumption from the UK in February than there was in January 2021.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ British Overseas Territories: Un Climate Conference 2021****Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[167352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the British Overseas Territories on preparations for 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.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[\[167283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 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.

Nigel Adams:

The Communications directorate is responsible for delivering digital communications on behalf of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and supporting the social media activity of an overseas network of embassies. In the years 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-21 between 20 and 30 people have worked in the Communications directorate and key communications hubs to support and deliver digital communications activity. This covers those working to produce and disseminate social media content, deliver social media training, website publishing and social media analytics and evaluation.

■ Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Forces

Bob Blackman:

[\[169836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of reports that Armenia is covertly transporting armed men to the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in breach of the Ceasefire Agreement of 10 November 2020.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is concerned by reports that armed persons are being transported into Nagorno-Karabakh. During my recent visit to Armenia and Azerbaijan I urged both Governments to fully comply with the November ceasefire agreement and to refrain from unhelpful actions that may exacerbate the situation. The UK Government continues to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to settle all outstanding matters related to the conflict.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**Jim Shannon:**[\[167203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to help ensure that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe can return to the UK safely from Iran.

James Cleverly:

We are committed to doing everything we can to secure the immediate and permanent release of arbitrarily detained dual British nationals in Iran. We continue to raise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case at the most senior levels in the Iranian Government. The Foreign Secretary continues directly to press Foreign Minister Zarif for this and the Prime Minister has raised the issue with President Rouhani, most recently on 10 March. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most recently on 15 March

The FCDO remains in regular contact with both Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her family, and we continue to provide them with all support possible. We welcome the removal of Nazanin's ankle tag, but Iran's continued treatment of her is intolerable. She must be allowed to return to the UK as soon as possible to be reunited with her family.

■ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: Public Appointments**Caroline Lucas:**[\[167179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2021 to Question 154939 on Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: Public appointments, what discussions he had with the Australian Prime Minister on 27 October 2020 on UK support for Mathias Cormann to become secretary-general of the OECD.

James Duddridge:

We do not normally publish details of private conversations with other world leaders beyond the existing public record.

■ Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[167160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of increasing UK support to the OSCE.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a firm supporter of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), whose principles and commitments provide a roadmap for enhancing the security of all participating States. Through our annual contribution to the OSCE Unified Budget and our regular diplomatic engagement, we provide support towards the full range of OSCE work, including its autonomous human rights institutions and network of field missions.

We are one of the largest financial contributors to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine. We also aim to enhance organisational effectiveness by seconding UK personnel with relevant expertise into OSCE positions. There are currently UK secondees in a number of key positions, including within the SMM and Kosovo field mission. As chair of the OSCE Security Committee in 2020 and 2021, we aim to set a wide-ranging agenda for discussion and embed lasting reforms on a range of security priorities, including serious organised crime and cyber security.

■ Tigray: Armed Conflict

Alex Sobel:

[\[167303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned about the fighting in Tigray and have consistently urged all parties to avoid conflict spill-over into neighbouring regions, prioritise the protection of civilians and security and allow unfettered humanitarian access. We have, and will continue to advocate that a political process is essential to bring a full end to fighting and a sustainable settlement for Tigray. The Foreign Secretary raised these points when he met with Prime Minister Abiy on 22 January and pressed for a political dialogue to bring a lasting peace to Tigray. I also pressed for political dialogue to end the conflict when I spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK on 24 February. 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, 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 £15.4m of UK Aid is helping to support those affected by the Tigray conflict. The Government of Ethiopia must act now to protect its people.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[167332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support peace talks and the end of conflict in Tigray.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned about the fighting in Tigray and have consistently urged all parties to avoid conflict spill-over into neighbouring regions, prioritise the protection of civilians and security and allow unfettered humanitarian access. We have, and will continue to advocate that a political process is essential to bring a full end to fighting and a sustainable settlement for Tigray. The Foreign Secretary raised these points when he met with Prime Minister Abiy on 22 January and pressed for a political dialogue to bring a lasting peace to Tigray. I also pressed for political dialogue to end the conflict when I spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK on 24 February.

■ Tigray: Human Rights**Fleur Anderson:****[R] [167333]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports of (a) Human Rights Watch and (b) the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission of the (i) massacre in Axum and (ii) potential scale of human rights abuses in Tigray.

James Duddridge:

Over recent weeks multiple reports - including from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission - have begun to document the scale of abuses and violations in Tigray. Since the conflict started, the UK has consistently called for an end to fighting, and for all parties to the conflict to prioritise the protection of civilians. On 26 February I stated that we are deeply saddened and concerned by the reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on the human rights violations of civilians in Axum, Ethiopia. These require a serious and urgent response from the Government of Ethiopia. We continue to call for independent, international investigations into these and other crimes reported in Tigray, including in multilateral fora, such as the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council, and for the Government of Ethiopia to ensure full access for human rights organisations. We have made this clear to the Government of Ethiopia.

■ Tigray: Humanitarian Aid**Alex Sobel:****[167304]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the supply of humanitarian, food, and medical assistance to people affected by the war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

The UK has been consistent in calling for free and unfettered humanitarian access to 4.5 million people in need. 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 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, 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 £15.4m of UK Aid is helping to

support those affected by the Tigray conflict. The Government of Ethiopia must act now to protect its people.

■ **Tigray: Overseas Aid**

Alex Sobel:

[\[167302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support vulnerable women, children and the elderly in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

In Tigray, our priority remains to support civilians affected by the conflict particularly the most vulnerable including women, children and the elderly. We are working with our partners to understand how aid is reaching those most in need and we continue to advocate for unhindered humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

In response to the crisis in Tigray the UK has allocated £15.4m to humanitarian partners. The UK is funding critical services for survivors of sexual gender-based violence is also supporting the supply of dignity kits to women and girls.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[167331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of the £11.4 million of UK aid to the Tigray region has been distributed; and what assessment he has made of the accessibility of that aid to civilians in Tigray.

James Duddridge:

In response to the crisis in Tigray the UK has allocated £15.4m to humanitarian agencies. All funds have been disbursed to partners. We continue to work with the UN to promote and monitor access and the delivery of humanitarian support to all those who need it, including to civilians in contested areas. We do not think that civilians have sufficient access to that aid. I re-enforced the urgency of the need for humanitarian access when I spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 24 February. The Government of Ethiopia must act now to protect its people.

■ **Yousuf Ali Khan**

Hilary Benn:

[\[167161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to his counterpart in Pakistan on the arrest of UK citizen, Mr Yousuf Ali Khan in that country on 13 February 2021.

Nigel Adams:

The British High Commission in Islamabad is providing consular assistance to Mr Khan, and is in touch with his family, his lawyer and the Pakistani authorities about his detention. On 5 March our High Commissioner to Pakistan raised Mr Khan's case with the Government of Pakistan. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, consular staff in Pakistan are not currently conducting in-person visits to British Nationals in custody.

However, our High Commission has requested consular telephone access to Mr Khan.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Yorkshire and the Humber

Jon Trickett: [\[146772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many A&E (a) type one, (b) type two and (c) type three units there were in Yorkshire and the Humber region in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 4 February 2021]: This information is not collected centrally.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitals

Justin Madders: [\[168964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many inpatients have been treated for (a) covid-19 and (b) non-covid-19 related issues at each Nightingale hospital in each month since April 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 18 March 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.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[137963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidence base was for the Government's decision to allow health services to delay the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine; and for what reason the Government's policy on that matter differs to the advice of the manufacturer and the World Health Organization.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The United Kingdom's decision to delay the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine has been taken based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination Immunisation (JCVI), as well as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

After studying the available data, it's clear both vaccines provide substantial protection within two to three weeks of vaccination from severe COVID-19 disease. The Government is advised on the safety, efficacy and strategy for the vaccines by independent scientists including those from the JCVI and the Commission on Human Medicines Expert Advisory Group. While we are monitoring different countries' vaccination plans and rollouts, the approach taken in the UK is based on the advice of the world's leading clinicians and scientists.

Thangam Debonnaire: [137965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will provide weekly figures on the number of covid-19 vaccination doses which were wasted as a result of (a) supply chain issues and (b) appointment no-shows.

Dan Jarvis: [142934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 vaccines have been disposed as a result of missed vaccination appointments.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 January 2021]: Data on wastage of vaccination doses is not currently held centrally. Work is ongoing across the vaccination programme to standardise and increase the information available for management purposes. However, no vaccines should be wasted. All vaccination centres should have a reserve list of people in the cohorts currently being vaccinated who can be called in case doses would be wasted. If no members of the currently vaccinated cohorts are available, it is recommended that members of the priority cohorts next in line be vaccinated.

Dan Jarvis: [R] [142937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people in priority group 1 for the covid-19 vaccination in South Yorkshire will not have to travel more than 10 miles from their home to receive that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 January 2021]: Currently, more than 98% of the population in England is within 10 miles of a vaccine service. In a small number of highly rural areas, the vaccination centre will be a mobile unit. A map of vaccination centres, including those in South Yorkshire, is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/vaccination-sites/>

Claudia Webbe: [148053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many housebound residents have received at least one dose of a covid-19 vaccination in (a) Leicester East constituency and (b) the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

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 publishes the number of people in the clinically extremely vulnerable cohort who have received their first and second doses, updated weekly. The number of vaccinations in each United Kingdom constituency by age group is also updated weekly. The data is available at the following link:

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

■ Coronavirus: Wales**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[141958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has received from the Welsh Government in relation to basing the supply of covid-19 vaccines to Wales on relative need as opposed to a population share.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 27 January 2021]: Departmental officials and the Welsh Government regularly discuss the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in Wales. Allocation is based upon the Barnett formula, which uses relative population to allocate vaccines fairly across the four nations. The Welsh Government have agreed the use of this formula.

■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[169044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to introduce a target for the average time taken to provide a diagnosis of endometriosis of (a) four years or less by 2025 and (b) 12 months or less by 2030.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Important research in primary care when women present with endometriosis-like symptoms is currently underway, hosted by the National Institute of Health Research. The results will be published later this year and will help us to understand delays in diagnosis. On 8 March, we launched a 12-week call for evidence as part of the first Government-led Women's Health Strategy for England. The online survey within the call for evidence seeks information on gynaecological conditions, including endometriosis.

■ Health Services: South Yorkshire**Dan Jarvis:** [R] [\[168937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to make changes to the boundary of the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System area.

Dan Jarvis: [R] [\[168938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of changing the boundary of the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System area on waiting list times for patients awaiting operations postponed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Dan Jarvis: [R] [\[168939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of changing Integrated Care System area

boundaries on delivery of (a) the NHS Long Term Plan and (b) health inequalities in South Yorkshire.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 18 March 2021]: Following discussions between the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement, Integrated Care System (ICS) boundaries which are not aligned with local authority boundaries are being reviewed to ensure future arrangements can support effective partnership working between the National Health Service and local government. South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS has been identified as one of the areas included in this boundary review. NHS England and NHS Improvement will continue supporting any affected ICS to ensure they are able to achieve the greatest effectiveness and opportunity from their current working arrangements.

Along with placing ICS on a statutory footing, greater alignment of ICS and local authority boundaries will help bring together the delivery of health services, the delivery of social care and the delivery of local public health advice and services into and across shared geographical footprints. This will support areas to continue to address issues that rely on joined up approaches such as tackling health inequalities.

■ **Incontinence: Health Services**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[168854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the care of patients with major (a) continence and (b) prolapse issues is expedited as covid-19 restrictions are eased in recognition of the increase in waiting times for provision of that care that has accrued to those patients as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 18 March 2021]: NHS England understands the need for improved services and care to be consistently available for those suffering from bladder and bowel problems. The approach remains to make full use of available capacity, both in the National Health Service and in contracted independent hospitals, to maintain elective activity as far as possible.

Working with and agreed by the Royal Colleges, a national clinical stratification programme has been established to make sure that every patient waiting for surgery, including patients with major continence and prolapse issues, can partake in decision-making discussions regarding their treatment. This will also include the assignment of a priority code to ensure that patients with the greatest clinical need are prioritised for treatment.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Justin Madders:

[\[143804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to my letter of 21 September 2020 on ME and Covid-19.

Edward Argar:

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

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

■ NHS Injury Benefits Scheme**Hywel Williams:**[\[165445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what avenues of appeal applicants who have been denied permanent injury benefit under the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme are able to take if they can demonstrate inconsistencies between the findings at different stages of the review process.

Hywel Williams:[\[165446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the employment criteria for Dispute Advisers within the NHS Business Service Authority.

Hywel Williams:[\[165447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of rejected applications for permanent injury benefit under the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme have been successfully appealed in each year since 2002.

Hywel Williams:[\[165448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many complaints his Department has received on the suitability of the review process for the award of (a) permanent injury benefit and (b) any other benefits under the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme, since 2002.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 March 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is responsible for the administration of the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Decisions on applications to the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme are based on the rules of the scheme and informed by medical evidence. Where an applicant is dissatisfied with a decision made, the NHS Business Services Authority operates a two stage Internal Dispute Resolution (IDR) procedure in accordance with the Pensions Act 1995. If the IDR process has been exhausted and the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, they may approach the Pensions Ombudsman to investigate their complaint. No statistics have been produced on how many and what proportion of rejected applications for permanent injury benefit under the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme have been successfully appealed in each year since 2002. For the NHS Business Services Authority to interrogate all individual member records, as would be necessary to obtain this data, would incur disproportionate cost

To obtain the information requested on the number of complaints received since 2002 would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **NHS Test and Trace: Finance**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[167259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a breakdown of (a) funding and (b) funding that has been allocated but not yet spent for NHS Test and Trace.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 March 2021]: Test and Trace was allocated a £22 billion budget for the financial year 2020/21. Actual audited expenditure will be published as part of the Department's annual accounts.

■ **NHS Walk-in Centres: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Jon Trickett:

[\[146771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS walk-in centres there were in Yorkshire and the Humber region in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 4 February 2021]: This information is not collected centrally.

■ **NHS: Waiting Lists**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[148791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the median waiting time is for patients waiting over 12 months for routine NHS treatment at each NHS trust in England.

Edward Argar:

The data is not held centrally.

■ **Test and Trace Support Payment**

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[124663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many local authorities (a) have spent and (b) will have spent by the end of December 2020 the self isolation payment funds they have received; and whether he plans to provide additional funding to those local authorities.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: The Government continues to work closely with the 314 local authorities in England to monitor payments made under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. Information on the payments made by local authorities will be published in due course.

The Government has provided additional funding and will continue to provide funding as necessary to local authorities. On the launch of the scheme in September 2020,

the Government provided an initial £50 million to local authorities. To reflect rising incidence levels, the Government provided a further £20 million in January 2021 and increased funding by a further £39 million in February 2021. This will ensure local authorities can continue to make payments and support people on low incomes to stay at home and self-isolate when required to do so.

As announced on 22 February, the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme will continue into the summer and will be expanded to cover parents who are unable to work because they are caring for a child who is self-isolating.

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[164516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a parent or carer of a child told to isolate as part of the Self-Isolation Service Hub at education settings are eligible for the Test and Trace payment support if they must stay at home to care for their child; and how that adult can obtain a reference number from Track and Trace to apply for support from the local authority.

Helen Whately:

The Government has expanded eligibility for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to include a parent or guardian who has to stay off work to look after a child who is self-isolating. We are working closely with all 314 local authorities in England to implement this change as quickly as possible, including establishing the best way in which that parent or guardian can prove that their child has been told to self-isolate if they are not informed by NHS Test and Trace.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Enfield

Kate Osamor: [\[167269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many properties are classified as (a) initial accommodation, (b) hostels and (c) hostel-like accommodation for asylum seekers in the borough of Enfield.

Kevin Foster:

There are currently no properties classified as initial accommodation, hostels or hostel-like accommodation for Asylum Seekers in the borough of Enfield.

■ Bank Services: Fraud

Marion Fellows: [\[167256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases of online banking fraud against individuals there were in each year since 2015.

Marion Fellows: [\[167257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to strengthen protections for consumers against online banking fraud.

Kevin Foster:

ONS figures on fraud are broken down into 'Bank and credit account fraud', 'Consumer and retail fraud', 'Advance fee fraud' and 'Other fraud'. There is no specific breakdown relating to online banking fraud, although last year (March 2020) 53% of all fraud incidents estimated by the CSEW were thought to be cyber-related.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL STATISTICS: CHEQUE, PLASTIC CARD AND ONLINE BANK ACCOUNTS (NOT PSP) FRAUD REPORTS, HOWEVER, IT'S WORTH NOTHING THIS WILL INCLUDE INDIVIDUAL VICTIM REPORTS AND REPORTS FROM BUSINESSES

Year ending September 2015	269,709
Year ending September 2016	284,743
Year ending September 2017	286,979
Year ending September 2018	270,154
Year ending September 2019	325,436
Year ending September 2020	311,625

The Government takes all forms of fraud very seriously and continues to work closely with the banking and finance industry, consumer protection and victim support groups to prevent scams by closing down the vulnerabilities fraudsters exploit in order and to ensure the victim remains at the centre of our considerations by making sure they are better protected.

The Government's ambitious Economic Crime Plan (ECP) sets out the significant action we are taking in close conjunction with the private sector to combat all economic crimes.

The ECP sets out 7 priority areas agreed in January 2019 by the Economic Crime Strategic Board, the ministerial level public-private board charged with setting the UK's strategic priorities for combatting economic crime and strengthening the powers and capabilities of law enforcement, powers, the justice system and private sector to detect, deter and disrupt <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/economic-crime-plan-2019-to-2022>

We are also investing more to tackle economic crime. The 2020 Spending Review announced an increase in the Government's efforts to combat economic crime by providing an additional £30.5 million in resource and £32.5 million in capital funding in 2021/22, including support for the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) and City of London Police as national lead force for fraud.

We have also launched the Suspicious Email Reporting Service, run by the National Cyber Security Centre, which enables the public to report scams and anything appearing suspicious. Already over 5 million reports have been received, leading to

over 36,000 scams taken down from the internet and the closure of over 71,000 harmful websites.

The Financial Conduct Agency (FCA) requires banks to maintain effective systems and controls to prevent the risk they might be used for financial crime. The protection for consumers who fall victim to fraudulent transactions is set out in the Payment Services Regulations 2017 which state a customer who claims they did not authorise a transaction on their account must receive a refund from their bank, unless the bank has reasonable grounds to suspect the customer is liable for the transaction (for example due to customer fraud or gross negligence).

The Government is committed to tackling fraud and ensuring victims of Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams are protected. The Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) published a call for views on APP scams in February 2021 which set out various measures which could deliver a higher level of protection for consumers. The Government looks forward to engaging with the outcomes of the PSR's call for views, including considering what further actions may be necessary to make progress on this issue.

Finally, it remains important the public reports fraud to Action Fraud either by phone on 0300 123 2040 or via:

http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud.

Scam emails and texts can be reported by texting your mobile provide on 7726 or forwarding suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

■ Home Office: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[167285]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many officials in (a) her 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.

Kevin Foster:

There are currently 9 social media specialists in the department working as part of the communication directorate on the production and delivery of social media products to promote the important work the department does to secure our borders and protect the public. The department has approximately 33,000 staff with a communication directorate of 121 staff.

In 2018-19, there were 6 specialists and at the beginning of 2020 there were 8 specialists in the social media team.

■ Police

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[167172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that police officers retain the trust of the public to keep them safe while both on duty and off duty.

Kit Malthouse:

The vast majority of police officers serve with utmost integrity to earn the public's trust. This trust is crucial to our model of policing by consent and why we continue to take steps to ensure police officers are subject to rigorous vetting procedures and held to the highest professional standards. Last year, we legislated to carry out a major overhaul of the police complaints and discipline systems to increase their accountability, transparency and efficiency. These reforms included further measures to increase the effectiveness of the Independent Office for Police Conduct. We continue to keep these matters under review.

■ Urban Areas: Safety

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[167171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support local authorities to improve the safety of streets in their area at night.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to cutting crime and delivering the safer streets that the public deserves, at all times of the day.

The Government is also committed to recruiting 20,000 additional police officers, over 6,000 of whom are already in place. Deployment of the new officers will be a matter for Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables but their presence should contribute to making streets safer.

The Safer Streets Fund was launched on 26 January 2020, providing £25 million in 2020/21 to support 52 areas across England and Wales that are persistently and disproportionately affected by neighbourhood and acquisitive crimes, like burglary, robbery and theft. The fund is being used by Police and Crime Commissioners to invest in well evidenced, physical crime prevention measures, such as improved street lighting and CCTV.

On 28 January 2021, we launched a second £20m round of the Safer Streets Fund, for 2021/22. This second round will give funding to Police and Crime Commissioners and Local Authorities to invest in crime prevention, both in commercial and residential areas.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing: Cambridgeshire**

Daniel Zeichner: [\[167223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what criteria his Department used to determine that insufficient delivery progress and below expectation of value for money has been achieved in order to release further funds for the £100 million Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Affordable Housing Programme.

Christopher Pincher:

To reach a decision, the Department assessed a number of metrics to evaluate delivery and value for money.

The Department remains committed to supporting affordable housing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and will consider making further funding available for schemes that can deliver by the end of March 2022.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Social Media

Darren Jones: [\[167287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 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.

Eddie Hughes:

MHCLG has a creative team which supports the Department's digital channels. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to, content creation for social media. This team's headcount in the format requested is as follows:

- 2018-19 – 4
- 2019-20 – 5
- 2020-21 – 5

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-pacific Partnership**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[169077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her planned timescale is for the beginning of formal discussions for the UK to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Greg Hands:

On 1st February, we submitted our notification of intent to begin the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) accession process.

This is the first formal step towards accession before formal negotiations start later in the year. The CPTPP member countries are now considering our notification and will decide when to commence negotiations. These would be taken forward through an Accession Working Group to agree the terms of our accession.

■ Trade Agreements: Overseas Aid

Gareth Thomas: [\[167830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effect of the decision to reduce funding for Official Development Assistance on (a) securing and (b) enhancing future trade relationships; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA).

We remain a world leading aid donor, spending 0.5% of *Gross National Income* (GNI), which means we will spend more than £10 billion next year on ODA, with trade remaining one of our priorities for our ODA spend.

We remain committed to enhancing our trading relationships with developing countries, including through implementing and improving both our Economic Partnership Agreements and the UK Generalised Scheme of Preferences.

We will return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the fiscal situation allows.

JUSTICE

■ Coronavirus: Employment Tribunals Service

Justin Madders: [\[167236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims have been lodged in relation to the calculation of wages via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme since March 2020.

Justin Madders: [\[167242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims have been lodged relating to unfair redundancy processes where covid-19 self-isolation or sickness periods are a factor since March 2020.

Justin Madders: [\[167243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims have been lodged for unfair dismissal due to sickness levels related to covid-19 self-isolation since March 2020.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service does not hold the requested information.

■ Courts: Coronavirus**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[167188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, by what date the backlog of cases before the courts as a result of the covid-19 outbreak is planned to be cleared.

Chris Philp:

We have responded quickly and in an innovative manner to the challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic to our criminal courts and the wider justice system. The date by which the courts recover to pre-pandemic levels of activity is sensitive to a range of influences and so is difficult to predict precisely. Those influences include when social distancing ends, and the number, nature and complexity of the cases flowing into the court system.

Further detail is published in the [HMCTS recovery plan](#).

■ Ethnic Groups: Criminal Proceedings**Ruth Jones:** [\[166634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the increasing number of Black, Asian and ethnic minority people in the criminal justice system.

Alex Chalk:

This government is committed to tackling inequality and all forms of discrimination. No one should face discrimination, which is why we welcomed David Lammy's 2017 review which shone a necessary light on disparity in the treatment of Black, Asian and ethnic minority individuals in the criminal justice system. The actions the Government committed to undertake in response to the 35 recommendations made in the Lammy Review have either been completed or reasonably require an extended timeframe. The range of our current work is now broader than the agenda set out by the Review. I have been working with the Home Office and Cabinet Office on the establishment of the Independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in addition to the focus my department is bringing to HM Prison and Probation, and the work of the Youth Justice Board with young people. A cross-governmental approach with the Criminal Justice Board also allows us to work with senior officials to assist in generating cross-system impetus to drive forward the race agenda. We are also aware that the Independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities is looking into issues pertaining to this area.

■ Magistrates: Retirement**Alberto Costa:** [\[167255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has plans to increase the retirement age for magistrates.

Chris Philp:

On 8 March, we published the government response to the Judicial Mandatory Retirement Age Consultation, which sets out our intention to legislate, when parliamentary time allows, to increase the mandatory retirement age of judicial office holders, including magistrates, to 75. The legislation will include a transitional provision to enable retired magistrates who are younger than the new MRA to apply to return to the bench subject to business need. The process by which such applications are to be made and considered will be set out in due course.

Prisoners: Legal Opinion**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[167360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a national scheme to provide written legal resources to prisoners.

Alex Chalk:

We are committed to ensuring that prisoners have access to resources to exercise their legal rights.

All prisoners have access to a wide variety of legal information through prison libraries, including access to legal documentation, prison policy documents, and guidance on legal procedure. Essential visits from legal representatives and volunteers are also permitted in prisons during the pandemic.

In addition, we work with partner organisations who offer legal advice and representation.

Prisons and Young Offender Institutions: Crimes of Violence**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[167345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of assaults on prison staff in (a) young offenders institutions and (b) prisons were investigated by police forces external to the prison disciplinary system in (i) West Yorkshire and (ii) England in 2019.

Alex Chalk:

Any prisoner who commits an act of violence whether that be against a fellow inmate or member of staff can expect to have action taken against them.

Currently, data is not held centrally on the number of assaults that are committed by prisoners against staff in young offender's institutions or prisons that were investigated by Police in West Yorkshire and England. This is being reviewed with the aim to collate data from all establishments for all crimes committed in prison, whilst also creating guidance on how to appropriately refer crimes committed in prison to the police.

The 'Crime in Prison Referral Agreement' was created in May 2019 and sets out the agreement between Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), National

Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The aim is to ensure that acts of criminality that occur in prison are appropriately addressed within the Criminal Justice System.

In line with the Crime in Prison Referral Agreement, assaults against members of staff will be referred to the police for investigation and consideration for prosecution where appropriate. Less serious assaults, are more appropriately dealt with by the prison disciplinary system.

The courts retain the discretion to decide whether sentences should be served concurrently or consecutively, based on the facts of the case. The Sentencing Council's Totality guideline provides courts with guidance on whether sentences should be served concurrently or consecutively. Where the individual is serving a determinate sentence and commits another offence after the original sentence was imposed, the new sentence will generally be consecutive to the original sentence.

It was announced in March 2020 that anyone using coronavirus to threaten emergency workers would face serious criminal charges punishable by up to 12 months in prison under the Assaults on Emergency Workers Offences Act 2018. HMPPS has since issued guidance to support staff in referring such cases to the police.

■ Prisons and Young Offender Institutions: West Yorkshire

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[167346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of staff in (a) prisons and (b) young offender institutions in West Yorkshire are employed by private contractors.

Alex Chalk:

I can confirm that as of 16 March 2021 in prisons and young offender institutions within the West Yorkshire region (HMPs Leeds, New Hall, Wealstun, Wetherby and Wakefield), there was a total of c.2,100 directly employed staff, and approximately 700 non-directly employed employees.

Staff employed by private contractors mainly provide services in healthcare, education and facilities management. This information has been taken from individual local prison records and has not been verified centrally.

HM Prison and Probation Workforce statistics are published quarterly, and the latest publication can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2020>. These only provide data for directly employed staff.

■ Public and Commercial Services Union

Justin Madders:

[\[167249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Public and Commercial Services Union on safety concerns raised on covid-19.

Alex Chalk:

From the outset of the pandemic, my senior officials have engaged extensively at a national level with the Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS), which includes the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), consulting on policies and processes necessary to make the estate safe, and to maintain access to justice for those who need it. This collaboration, alongside engagement with Public Health agencies, representatives of those using the justice system and others, has helped the department to ensure its ways of working are as safe and effective as possible.

Regular dedicated Health and Safety meetings have continued to ensure that there is active communication and consultation between employees, the DTUS, judiciary, contractors and other stakeholders in respect of security, health and safety procedures and responsibilities.

Since the first lockdown in March 2020, my senior officials have scheduled an extensive programme of meetings with the DTUS to ensure safety concerns are properly considered and addressed. This has included, not only dedicated weekly DTUS Covid-19 meetings and regular scheduled meetings with senior leaders, including the HMCTS CEO, the Chief People Officer, HMPPS Director General and the Permanent Secretary, but also a series of business-specific DTUS meetings with the appropriate Directors to discuss Human Resource policy issues and operational changes necessary to ensure safety.

Wherever possible, joint risk assessments are conducted with trade union Health and Safety representatives and, in addition, my senior officials at a regional level have continued to hold regular meetings with regional trade union representatives, where safety and security matters are raised and discussed.

■ Segregation of Prisoners

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[167347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners were segregated under Rule 45 of the Prison Rules for a period longer than three days in the last five years in (a) West Yorkshire and (b) England.

Alex Chalk:

Establishments manage all offenders in segregation under the policy laid out in Prison Service Order 1700 -Segregation. This policy states that segregation should only be used as a last resort and those segregated should have their health, wellbeing and basic needs safeguarded. Dedicated segregation staff focus on helping

prisoners manage their behaviour, address their problems and prepare them for return to normal location when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Local records are maintained at each individual establishment, but HMPPS does not centrally hold regional (West Yorkshire) or national data (including timeframes) on the number of prisoners segregated under Rule 45.

TRANSPORT

■ Department for Transport: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[\[167280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

a) No officials in the Secretary of State's private office are allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media.

b) Resource within the wider department allocated to the production and promotion of online content for use on social media equates to approximately 11.15 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) in 2018/19, 11.4 FTE in 2019/20, and 12.65 FTE in 2020/21.

This resource can be broken down across two main areas, the central Communications team and separate policy and HR teams.

The central Communications team create and promote departmental social media content managing several corporate social media channels as well as some behavioural change campaign channels. For example THINK!, the critical road safety campaign to help reduce deaths and serious injury on roads; and 'It's everyone's journey' championing equal access on public transport. The number of officials in the central team, working across a range of disciplines including media and digital, equates to approximately 7.15 FTE in 2018/19, 7.4 FTE in 2019/20, and 8.15 FTE in 2020/21

These people are not solely focussed on the production and promotion of online content for social media although it forms the majority of their role alongside channel management, brand and design, accessibility, insight and evaluation and wider social media support including training.

HR and some policy teams across the department also own and manage their own social media channels. The number of officials across HR and the different policy teams equates to approximately 4 FTE in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and 4.5 FTE in 2020/21.

■ Jet Skis

Stephen Morgan: [\[169016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of (a) anti-social behaviour and (b) dangerous incidents committed by jet-skiers; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The riding of personal watercraft for pleasure is, in the majority of cases, conducted both sensibly and safely. Serious incidents involving these vessels are rare. However, the Department recognises that, through their actions, a minority of users can endanger other water users and wildlife.

Local authorities already have powers to respond to instances of dangerous or anti-social behaviour in the waters they manage, and the Department will shortly be consulting on measures to further strengthen enforcement provision.

TREASURY

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Justin Madders: [\[167241\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers who have accessed the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme have made staff redundant in each month since April 2020.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) do not hold information on which employees have been made redundant.

HMRC publish statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for each month of the scheme. Alongside this, HMRC have published secondary analysis of furloughs that have ended. This shows that 90% of employees who stopped being furloughed between April 2020 and July 2020 were still on their original payroll in August 2020. However, this analysis does not distinguish between employees who chose to leave their jobs and those that were made redundant. The publication can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-secondary-analysis>.

Kim Johnson: [\[167340\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, if he will extend the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme registration date beyond 31 October 2020 to cover those workers taken on as covid-19 tier restrictions were relaxed but were subsequently let go without furlough payments from 30 December 2020.

Jesse Norman:

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has moved the cut-off date for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme when possible, bringing millions of people into the scope of the scheme who were previously ineligible. For claim periods under the extension from 1 May 2021, as announced at Budget, the Government has extended the eligibility window so that it will run from 20 March 2020 until 2 March 2021. Based on early estimates, this means that about 2.4 million more jobs are eligible for the scheme.

However, for all eligibility decisions under the CJRS, the Government balances the need to support as many people as possible with the need to protect the scheme from fraud. The 30 October 2020 cut-off date is necessary for claims relating to the period from 1 November 2020 to 30 April 2021, because having a cut-off date on the day before an announcement of an extension to the CJRS allows as many people as possible to be included, while balancing the risk of fraud that exists as soon as the forward plan becomes public.

The CJRS is only one part of the substantial package of support that the Government has introduced for businesses and individuals.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Directors**Caroline Lucas:**[\[167181\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his interview with Martin Lewis on 4 March 2021, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of limited company directors receiving furlough for PAYE income on the (a) ability of limited companies to (i) generate commercial revenue and (ii) retain or attract new customers and (b) future viability of limited companies; and what estimate his Department has made of the potential number of limited company directors receiving furlough for PAYE income who will be in business in 12 months' time.

Jesse Norman:

The purpose of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is to protect jobs by easing the financial burden on businesses whose operations have been affected by COVID-19, and therefore reduce the risk of permanent business closures.

Directors paying themselves a salary through a PAYE scheme have access to the CJRS on the same terms as other employees, if other eligibility criteria are met. Where furloughed directors need to carry out particular duties to fulfil their statutory obligations, they may do so provided it is no more than would reasonably be judged necessary for that purpose. In particular, they should not do work of a kind they would carry out in normal circumstances to generate commercial revenue or provide services to or on behalf of their company, as this is not in line with the scheme's objectives, which are to support businesses to cover employment costs, not lost revenue. This also applies to companies with a sole director. However, in order to support people to work where they can, and where it is permitted within the

restrictions, the flexible element of the CJRS remains available. Businesses can use the scheme for employees for any amount of time and shift pattern.

For clarity, dividends are not covered by the CJRS. Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages. Under current reporting mechanisms it is not possible for HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources, and between dividends in lieu of employment income and as returns from other corporate activity.

HMRC's official statistics do not determine the job role of furloughed employments. Therefore, it is not possible to estimate the number of furloughed directors who will be in their current posts in 12 months' time.

■ Leisure and Retail Trade: Non-domestic Rates

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[167322]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to waive business rates for retail and leisure property until September 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Budget announced a three-month extension to the business rates holiday for eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors that was provided at Budget 2020. This means over 350,000 properties will pay no business rates for three months.

From 1 July 2021, 66% relief will be available subject to a cash cap that depends on whether businesses have been required to close or were able to open. This additional relief takes the total value of support in 2021-22 to £6 billion and means the vast majority of businesses will on average receive 75% relief across the year.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Birmingham Hall Green

Tahir Ali:

[167320]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people are receiving support from the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme in Birmingham Hall Green constituency.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC publish statistics on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-february-2021>.

As at 31 January 2021 4,600 individuals claimed the first SEISS grant, 4,300 individuals claimed the second SEISS grant and 4,000 individuals claimed the third SEISS grant in Birmingham Hall Green constituency.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Social Media

Darren Jones:

[\[167281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many officials in (a) her 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.

Guy Opperman:

The DWP is the largest department in Whitehall, making a difference to the lives of millions of people right across the country, and as such it is vital that communications are far-reaching, clear and effective. DWP manages social media through these key areas;

- At a national level in the Strategic Communications Directorate (SCD) to communicate key policy areas to the public, campaign messaging and ministerial priorities.
- At a local level in the Customer Experience Directorate (CED) through operational staff using jobcentre accounts that are a valuable resource to help people find work and access the support they need.
- In the Digital Group (DG) to communicate how it uses technology and innovation to build products and services that change the lives of people across the UK.

The following table shows the amount of staff who have a role in the production of social media content.

YEAR	NUMBER OF STAFF
2018/19	20
2019/20	27
2020/21	25

Operational staff who manage local jobcentre accounts are not included in these figures as social media forms a small part of their daily role. There are no officials in Ministers' private offices that create or manage content for social media.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[167228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government's Disability Unit has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the mental health of disabled people; and what steps that Unit is taking with other Government departments to tackle the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the mental health of disabled people.

Kirsten Oswald:

[167229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government's Disability Unit has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the health and wellbeing of disabled or seriously ill children; and what steps that Unit is taking with other Government departments to provide support for disabled or seriously ill children during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published data assessing the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on disabled people.

The 11 March 2021 ONS release can be found on this link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsondisabledpeopleingreatbritainmay2020>

Alongside this, insights from qualitative research commissioned by the Cabinet Office Disability Unit and conducted by Policy Lab with disabled people were used to understand the impact of the pandemic on the day-to-day lives of disabled people.

This Government is committed to supporting everyone's mental health and wellbeing, and to ensuring that the right support is in place. Mental health services have remained open throughout the pandemic, and, for those with severe needs or in crisis, all National Health Service mental health providers have established 24/7 urgent mental health helplines.

We have provided over £10million of additional funding for mental health charities to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time. We have also provided a further £6 million to support various charities, including those working with people with learning disabilities, autistic people and complex needs.

We recognise that the COVID-19 outbreak has hit families of children with disabilities or serious illnesses particularly hard. Supporting vulnerable children is a priority for this Government, and their wellbeing has been central to our response throughout the pandemic. We are, for example, providing £40.8 million for the Family Fund in 2020-21 to support over 80,000 families on low incomes raising children with disabilities or serious illnesses. This includes £13.5m to specifically respond to needs arising from the pandemic, which may include for example assistive technology to aid remote learning.

The Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. The Cabinet Office Disability Unit works with disability stakeholders and across Government Departments to ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered in the Government's response to COVID-19.

The Government remains committed to improving the lives of disabled people, and will publish the National Strategy for Disabled People this year. The strategy will take into account the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people and will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects of life.

■ Employment: Coronavirus**Andy McDonald:** [\[160680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answers of 26 February 2021 Questions 155053 and 155054 on Coronavirus and with reference to Table 1 of the Health and Safety Executive's Enforcement Management Model, if she will define what constitutes a credible risk that a fatal injury or injury that results in a permanent or irreversible disabling condition, or requires immediate treatment in hospital, or causes a permanent, progressive or irreversible condition, or causes permanent disabling, leading to a lifelong restriction of work capability or a major reduction in quality of life; and what the threshold is for meeting the criteria of credible.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 4 March 2021]: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) rightly takes the risk of Covid-19 in the work place seriously. HSE inspectors will take any necessary actions to ensure compliance whenever they find employers who are not meeting the Government's COVID-19 secure standards.

HSE's Enforcement Management Model (EMM) provides a framework structure supporting consistent, sensible and proportionate decision making across a very wide range of health and safety at work risks. Regulators are expected to use their knowledge and experience as well as technical guidance to identify the categories that best fit the situation they are dealing with.

EMM Table 1 describes general consequence categories of "serious," "significant," and "minor" injuries and health effects, for the purposes of applying the model to guide enforcement action in relation to breaches of health and safety law. This is a tool to guide proportionate enforcement outcomes so that businesses and other dutyholders are dealt with fairly and consistently.

EMM Table 1 states that a serious health effect is one which is "credible" will cause "a permanent, progressive or irreversible condition," or be "permanently disabling, leading to a lifelong restriction of work capability or a major reduction in quality of life."

For the purposes of this model, the general harm category for any given health risk is determined by the most credible (or most likely) health outcome, rather than the most serious outcome which may result.

Therefore, according to the model, the "credible outcome" for a worker's health means the most likely health outcome when considering the working age population as a whole.

It should be remembered that the EMM is simply a model and does not restrict HSE's inspectors from taking, where appropriate, the necessary enforcement action, including notices, to ensure that workplaces are COVID secure.

Andy McDonald: [\[163701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answers of 26 February 2021 to Questions 147867 and 160679, on Employment: Coronavirus, if she will

publish the (a) eleven data sets that HSE statisticians have drawn on to inform decisions about proportionate regulation and (b) methodology used to decide that the effects of covid-19 are non-permanent or reversible, non-progressive and any disability is temporary amongst the working population as a whole, not taking account of individuals with a particular resistance or susceptibility.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 11 March 2021]: Earlier Questions were related to how the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has used its Enforcement Management Model (EMM) to support proportionate decision-making by its inspectors in the pandemic. HSE reviewed evidence about that proportionality in November 2020 and the paper setting out the evidence, including the technical annex containing the data considered in the review, is on HSE's website here.

■ **Kickstart Scheme**

Justin Madders:

[\[167245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what monitoring her Department is carrying out to ensure that approved jobs via the Kickstart scheme are made available and advertised.

Mims Davies:

Once a Kickstart vacancy is approved, the job is uploaded on to Universal Credit system and is visible only to DWP staff. Young people who are eligible for the scheme 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.

Suzanne Webb:

[\[169973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employment roles have been created by the kickstart scheme to this date; and how many and what proportion of those roles have been in the technology sector.

Mims Davies:

Over 150,000 job placements have been approved for the Kickstart scheme. Over 50,000 vacancies have been made available for young people, so far over 6,000 job placements have started.

Over 4,000 of the vacancies are in the technology sector.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency.

■ Mobility Allowance

Emma Hardy:

[\[167939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of increasing the eligibility age of the Mobility Allowance.

Justin Tomlinson:

Mobility Allowance was incorporated into Disability Living Allowance (DLA), as the lower and higher rates of the mobility component, from 1992 and subsequently the standard and enhanced rates of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) when PIP was introduced to replace working age DLA from 2013.

Prior to the introduction of changes to State Pension age (SPa), to equalise and increase pensionable age for men and women, the upper age limit for claiming DLA and PIP was the day before reaching age 65. DLA claimants who were age 65 or over on 8 April 2013, when PIP was introduced, can continue to receive the benefit after that age for as long as they satisfy the conditions of entitlement. DLA claimants who were under the age of 65 on 8 April 2013 will be invited to claim PIP regardless of whether they are over the age of 65 at the time they are invited and can gain access to either component, at either rate, regardless of their age.

The upper age limit for claiming PIP by new claimants for the first time was last reviewed prior to the most recent changes to SPa made by the Pensions Act 2014 and is the day before reaching SPa, as set out in the Pensions Act 1995. Once someone is entitled to PIP they can continue to be paid beyond SPa so long as the conditions of entitlement remain satisfied.

■ Universal Credit

Kate Osamor:

[\[167918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the evidence of the Senior Responsible Owner of Universal Credit at the Department for Work and Pensions at the joint meeting of the Lords Economic Affairs Committee and Commons Work and Pensions Committee on 9 March 2021, whether the figure of 1.4 million legacy benefit claimants who would benefit financially from moving to universal credit is calculated on the basis of the temporary £20 a week uplift in universal credit being retained.

Will Quince:

The Department estimates around 1.4 million people currently on legacy benefits would have higher notional entitlement on Universal Credit before including the £20 standard allowance temporary uplift.

■ Universal Credit: North Wales**Mark Tami:** [\[169800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are claiming universal credit in each ward of each parliamentary constituency in North Wales.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit caseload data are not available at ward level.

The available information on the number of people on Universal Credit, by Residence Based Geography: National - Regional - Local Authority - Output Areas, including parliamentary constituency, is published monthly and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Work Capability Assessment**Kate Osamor:** [\[167270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2021 to Question 160753, what steps her Department is taking to support people who are unable to undertake a telephone assessment because of their health condition.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 4 March 2021 to Question [160753](#) and 9 March 2021 to Question [160755](#) respectively.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DEFENCE

■ International Military Services

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[161825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether International Military Services Ltd ceased trading in July 1991 or 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 March 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Ben Wallace:

IMS Ltd stopped taking on new business in ~~1989~~**1991**, but continued to fulfil a small number of existing contractual obligations. All such obligations had been completed by 2010 at which point the company ceased trading.