



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 21 April 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 21 April 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

■ Advanced Research and Invention Agency

Chi Onwurah:

[180487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the £50 million budget allocated for the first year of ARIA he estimates will be spent on (a) administration and HR functions and (b) high risk research projects.

Amanda Solloway:

The spending profile for ARIA will be for the leadership of ARIA to develop.

■ Advanced Research and Invention Agency: Finance

Chi Onwurah:

[180492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what factors the Government will take into account when deciding the year on year budget allocation for ARIA.

Amanda Solloway:

ARIA is being established to pursue long-term research that has a transformational impact over many years. As it always has done, BEIS will continue to work with HM Treasury to manage multi-year commitments against fiscal budgeting cycles.

■ Amazon: Delivery Services

Zarah Sultana:

[181449]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made representations to Amazon UK on (a) the death of a 21-year-old Amazon driver on 17 February 2021 and (b) the potential merits of reassessing delivery targets for Amazon UK delivery drivers.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: I was deeply saddened to hear the tragic news of the death of the Amazon driver, and I send my sincere condolences to their family. South Yorkshire Police are investigating and are appealing to anyone who witnessed the collision to contact them.

Benchmark standards for safe delivery plans and realistic schedules are set out in the joint HSE and Department for Transport guidance ([Driving at work: Managing work-related road safety INDG382\(rev1\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/publications/indg382/indg382rev1.pdf) ([hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)).

■ Buildings: Carbon Emissions

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[181326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of potential effect of delaying the publication of the Heat and Buildings strategy on his Department's ability to reduce carbon emissions in line with legally binding carbon budgets.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: In order to meet our Net Zero by 2050 target, we must act now to tackle the emissions produced by heating. In order to ensure continued progress, we have set a series of legally binding "carbon budgets", which are amongst the most stringent climate targets in the world.

The Government is planning to publish the Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out our policies and plans for the 2020s, demonstrating how they work together to ensure we are on track for net zero by the end of the decade. The Strategy will build on the content of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan and the Energy White Paper, setting the strategic context for decision making, institutional arrangements and enabling functions that will be critical to achieving the transition to low carbon heating.

The Heat and Buildings Strategy has not delayed policy implementation. Over the last 6 months, the Government has published and delivered a number of landmark policies and consultations, including the launch of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, and a consultation on introducing a performance based policy framework for large commercial and industrial buildings, proposals to introduce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards on Landlords as well as increasing ambition in the Non-Domestic Private Rented Sector to EPC B by 2030, where cost-effective.

■ Business: Carbon Emissions

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[179348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support businesses to become carbon neutral.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Achieving our net zero goal requires all businesses to take action. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has set out his Ten Point Plan for the UK to lead the world into a Green Industrial Revolution. This innovative programme sets out ambitious policies and £12 billion government investment to support up to 250,000 green jobs. It will accelerate our path to reaching net zero by 2050, and could unlock three times as much private sector investment by 2030.

The Prime Minister has also appointed my Hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs as the UK's Net Zero Business Champion ahead of COP26. My Hon. Friend's role is to encourage UK business to sign up to climate action via the Race to

Zero science-based targets initiative, to champion the actions that UK businesses are already taking and to help UK businesses exploit the many opportunities of the transition to a low carbon economy.

As a result of my Hon. Friend's campaign, 30 of the UK's FTSE 100 companies have signed up to Race to Zero, and he is about to launch a national small business mass mobilisation campaign.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Darren Jones:

[\[179369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 9 October 2020 to Question 98272, when he plans to publish the (a) names of the beneficiaries and (b) amounts of the loans with a nominal value of over €100,000 provided under the (i) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and (ii) Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

Paul Scully:

Details of facilities made available under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module in due course.

Our priority is to ensure borrowers are given notice before information about their loans is shared with the European Commission; we are working with lenders and the British Business Bank to facilitate this. A rolling programme of reporting will then publish details of aid granted within the preceding 12 months.

■ Business: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[180526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the amount of funding allocated from the public purse to businesses in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry to encourage (i) economic growth and (ii) employment.

Paul Scully:

We aim to make the UK the best place in the world to start, run and grow a business. The Government provides a wide range of support and information for small businesses including on the GOV.UK website. Free and impartial advice is also available via the Business Support Helpline on FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098 and via the network of 38 local Growth Hubs in England.

The Start Up Loans Programme, part of the Government-backed British Business Bank, offers loans up to £25,000, repayable at 6% per annum across 1-5 years. Across the UK, 81,608 loans have been made, worth over £707.6m from the programme's launch in 2012 to the end of February 2021.

Over the same period, in the Coventry North East constituency, 136 loans have been made worth £1,120,379. In the Coventry City Council area, 377 loans have been made to a value of £3,436,907. And in England 71,207 loans have been made worth £617,745,993. ^[1]

The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) self-reported that in 2019-20, its Growth Hub engaged with 66,452 businesses/individuals (including via digital channels); directly supported 1,798 businesses, of which 77 received over 12 hours of high-level support; and helped 648 individuals start a business.

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have benefitted from £131.84m in Local Growth Fund, over 3 Growth Deals, and the investments have secured over £28m in private sector investment. The LEP are also working with local partners to develop and implement a newly focused, partnership-led Strategic Framework to reset the local economy for a successful, inclusive, and resilient future. The LEP are committed to driving activities to minimise the negative economic impacts of Covid-19 in Coventry and Warwickshire. This includes the Growth Hub, which offers one-to-one advice and ongoing support to local businesses.

Coventry has also received over £8m funding to support it as the City of Culture 2021. The City of Culture events in Coventry are due to start in May of this year, which will benefit the city in many ways. In previous years this has included increases in investors opening new businesses and more opportunities to support the local community.

The Government's new 'Help to Grow' scheme will help small businesses across the UK learn new skills, reach new customers, and boost profits. Help to Grow: Management will provide intensive management skills support to 30,000 small businesses whilst Help to Grow: Digital could support 100,000 small businesses with online advice and a voucher for software costs. BEIS will be engaging with stakeholders shortly but businesses can register their interest now at <https://helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk/>.

[1] Figures do not include regions not able to be specified. For these regions, 113 loans were made worth 1,205,641 since 2012 to end February 2021.

■ Business: Debts

Colleen Fletcher:

[180527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of business debt in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Paul Scully:

Across all areas of the country, businesses have taken advantage of the Government's covid loan schemes to keep them going through the covid-19 outbreak. This has naturally led to an increase in business debt whilst safeguarding livelihoods.

The figures below are according to UK finance data by postcode^[1] which often do not align perfectly with administrative boundaries. These figures are the latest data for outstanding loans to small and medium enterprises only, up to Q3 2020:

- In Coventry North East, lending to SMEs was 54% higher in Q2 2020 (£395.1m), and 67% higher in Q3 2020 (£429.6m), when compared to the average since 2016 (£256.8m).
- In Coventry, lending to SMEs was 50% higher in Q2 2020 (£527.9m), and 64% higher in Q3 2020 (£575.4m), when compared to the average since 2016 (£351.5m).

The figures below are according to UK finance data for outstanding loans for small and medium enterprises by region, up to Q4 2020:

- in the West Midlands, lending to SMEs was 37% higher in Q2 2020 (£10.7bn), 48% higher in Q3 2020 (£11.5bn), and 39% higher in Q4 2020 (£10.9bn), when compared to the average since 2016 (£7.8bn).
- in England, lending to SMEs was 34% higher in Q2 2020 (£103.9bn), 43% higher in Q3 2020 (£111.4bn), and 46% higher in Q4 2020 (£113.5bn), when compared to the average since 2016 (£77.7bn).

[1] www.ukfinance.org.uk/data-and-research/data/business-finance/sme-lending-within-uk-postcodes

Colleen Fletcher:

[180528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of trends in the regional spread of business debt in (a) each of the last five years and (b) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Covid-19 outbreak did not substantially alter the trends in the regional spread of business debt.

The following figures are taken from UK Finance data and are taken as a share of the value of loan facilities of small and medium enterprises in England.

Between Q1 2017 and Q1 2020:

- London (18% to 23%), Yorkshire and the Humber (7% to 8%), and the East of England (7% to 8%) all increased their share of SME lending.
- Regional shares of SME lending fell in the South East (18% to 15%), South West (15% to 13%), North West (15% to 12%) and East Midlands (7% to 6%).
- Regional shares stayed the same in the North East (3%) and West Midlands (10%).

During the covid-19 outbreak, between Q1 2020 and Q4 2020:

- London (23% to 25%) and the South East (14% to 16%) increased their shares of SME lending.

- The East of England reduced its share of SME lending from 8% to 7%.
- The regional shares of SME lending in South West, East Midlands, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, North East and North West were unchanged.

These shares compare to the following table for Regional GDP:

Table: Regional GDP (2018 data) and SME lending (Q4 2020) shares in England.

AREA	GDP SHARE FOR EACH REGION (SOURCE: ONS)	SME LENDING SHARE FOR EACH REGION (SOURCE: UK FINANCE)
England	100%	100%
North East	3.4%	3%
North West	11.3%	12%
Yorkshire and The Humber	7.7%	8%
East Midlands	6.8%	6%
West Midlands	8.7%	10%
East of England	10.1%	7%
London	26.5%	25%
South East	16.9%	16%
South West	8.6%	13%

■ Business: Finance

Matt Vickers:

[\[180637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the criteria are for businesses to access the £375 million Government funding to help scale-up the most innovative, research and development intensive businesses.

Paul Scully:

Future Fund: Breakthrough is a new £375m UK-wide programme that will encourage private investors to co-invest alongside government in high-growth, innovative firms that have received prior equity investment. The programme will launch in the early summer of 2021 and will support the growth of UK-based, R&D intensive companies.

Detailed eligibility criteria will be published once the programme is open for applications.

■ Business: Renewable Energy

Stephanie Peacock:

[179349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support businesses to switch to renewable energy sources for their power supply.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is working with stakeholders to drive the ambitious action needed from UK businesses to help tackle climate change and reduce their impact on the environment.

Significant financial savings are available to businesses taking steps to improve their energy efficiency and decarbonise to achieve Net Zero. We are working to encourage as many UK businesses to pledge to join the Race to Zero campaign and set climate targets. The UK's Net Zero Business Champion, my Hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs, will also be launching a small and micro business campaign ahead of COP26, which is aimed at mass mobilising local businesses and getting as many as possible to sign up to the Race to Zero via a new UK landing page on the SME Climate Hub.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting Regulations (SECR) came into force on 1 April 2019 and have been introduced to simplify requirements for businesses to report on their energy use and carbon emissions. This provides greater levels of transparency, helping to stimulate demand for low carbon energy supplies.

We are supporting small-scale renewable electricity through the Smart Export Guarantee scheme (SEG). The SEG provides small-scale renewable generators the right to be paid for the excess energy they export to the grid.

The Clean Heat Grant (CHG) will be targeted at households and small non-domestic buildings, to enable the installation of heat pumps and, in limited circumstances, biomass, to provide space and water heating.

The Green Gas Support Scheme (GGSS) will follow on from support for biomethane under the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive, which is due to close to new applicants on 31 March 2021. The GGSS will provide tariff support for biomethane produced via anaerobic digestion. It will launch in autumn 2021 and will be open to applicants for four years.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage

Mick Whitley:

[R] [179561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what weighting he plans to give to the potential regional economic benefits of a project for domestic and industrial heat decarbonisation in the selection of track one and phase one carbon capture and storage projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Phase-1 of the Government's Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) Cluster Sequencing Process aims to sequence industrial clusters for decarbonisation over the next decade. The focus of the process will be in identifying those clusters most suited for deployment of CCUS from the mid-2020s, whilst also delivering wider benefits such as economic benefits and learnings that will enable the CCUS to be deployed at scale in the future. The Department is finalising the evaluation criteria and weightings, building on the weighting ranges that were set out in our recent consultation.

Mick Whitley:**[R] [179562]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what weighting he plans give to (a) cost and (b) deliverability by 2026 in the selection of track one carbon capture and storage projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Phase-1 of the Government's Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) Cluster Sequencing Process aims to sequence industrial clusters for decarbonisation over the next decade. The focus of the process will be in identifying those clusters most suited for deployment of CCUS from the mid-2020s, whilst also delivering wider benefits such as economic benefits and learnings that will enable the CCUS to be deployed at scale in the future. The Department is finalising the evaluation criteria and weightings, building on the weighting ranges that were set out in our recent consultation.

■ Clothing: Restart Grant Scheme**Rachael Maskell:****[182072]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Restart Grant scheme, whether bridal shops, that exclusively provide personal 1-2-1 dress fittings, should be categorised as (a) strand one non-essential retail or (b) strand two personal care.

Paul Scully:

Bridal Shops are categorised as non-essential retail for the purposes of the Restart Grant Scheme.

The definition of non-essential retail for the purposes of Restart Grants is as follows: a business that is open to the public and is used mainly or wholly for the purposes of retail sale or hire of goods or services, where the primary purpose of products or services provided are not necessary to the health and well-being of the public.

■ Competition and Markets Authority: Staff**John McDonnell:****[178783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2021 to Question 166306, on Competition and Markets Authority: Staff, if he will provide the same data for Non-Senior Civil Service performance

management outcomes for (a) BAME staff (i) over the age of 55 and (ii) under the age of 24 and (b) female staff working for the Competition and Markets Authority in the 2019-20 performance year.

Paul Scully:

The CMA is unable to provide requested data for the Non-Senior Civil Service ('non-SCS') performance ratings for the 2019 - 2020 performance year for BAME staff over the age of 55 (a, i) and BAME staff under the age of 24 (a, ii) as the CMA does not disclose data for groups with fewer than 5 staff under a given protected characteristic (or combination of protected characteristics) for data protection and privacy reasons. The staff groups in the categories requested have small populations (7 and 12, respectively) which are further broken down to fewer than 5 when considered by each performance rating

The performance management outcomes for female staff for the 2019 - 2020 performance year are set out below. Male staff performance outcomes have been included for completeness. The table sets out the proportion of each performance rating that were awarded to staff of each gender

(b) Female staff

PERFORMANCE RATING	FEMALE	MALE
Consistently Exceeding	47.2%	52.8%
Partially Exceeding	48.9%	51.1%
Consistently Achieving	53.3%	46.7%
Partially Achieving	50.1%	49.9%
Needs to Improve	25.0%	75.0%
Not Required (due to insufficient time in post)	49.9%	50.1%
CMA Non-SCS Profile	50.8%	49.2%

■ **Construction: Coronavirus**

Sam Tarry:

[\[178572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance the Government has published for construction sites to ensure that companies are adhering to covid-19 workplace rules.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Construction workers play a crucial role in supporting our public services, maintaining vital infrastructure, and providing and maintaining safe, decent homes for people to

live in. Throughout the pandemic, the Government has been clear that construction activity should continue, where it can take place safely.

The Government has worked with the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force, construction firms, and other stakeholders to develop guidance on safer working on construction sites. This is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>.

The construction industry has also developed Site and Branch Operating Procedures for firms and merchants, as well as guidance for small firms and mineral products suppliers. These provide advice as to how construction firms can apply the Government guidance on safer working.

■ Consumer Goods: Equality

Janet Daby:

[179539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an equality impact assessment of hair care products for Black hair being classed as non-essential items during the covid-19 lockdown; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that matter on (a) closure levels of businesses selling Black hair care products during covid-19 lockdowns and (b) the extent to which those products are stocked in major retailers.

Paul Scully:

Throughout the national restrictions, we have sought to keep as much of the retail sector open as possible, whilst balancing the need to reduce our day-to-day contact. In doing so, we have taken evidence from SAGE into account when making decisions.

Retailers have been permitted to sell their goods online and for click-and-collect (where possible) throughout the pandemic and, as of Monday 12th April, the retail sector is now open in its entirety. There has never been a defined list of essential and non-essential goods.

We continually review the impacts of the pandemic on all groups with protected characteristics.

■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [182041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to withdraw covid-19 guidance on close contact services which advises against providing reading materials such as newspapers and magazines in client waiting areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[182042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on businesses of the covid-19 guidance on close contact services that advises against providing reading materials such as newspapers and magazines in client waiting areas; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

We continue to keep the Safer Working [guidance](#) under constant review and will update the guidance in line with new scientific evidence as it arises. Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive have advised that there is currently no scientific evidence to support changing the Safer Working guidance in light of the new variants.

PHE guidance states that Covid-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact. Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with Covid-19 when people with the infection cough or sneeze or touch them. The risk of spread is greatest when people are close to each other, especially in poorly ventilated indoor spaces and when people spend a lot of time together in the same room.

Given that client waiting areas are high traffic with frequent contact on common surface areas, we recommend not providing shared reading materials to reduce transmission risk via surface contact. Individuals can bring their own reading materials that they have purchased but we advise businesses to not provide sharing copies due to the frequent change of hands.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[179312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to procure doses of covid-19 vaccine boosters to help deliver immunity to tackle new coronavirus variants which may have greater levels of resistance to available covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is assessing our existing vaccine portfolio against current variants, working closely with vaccine manufacturers and Public Health England to understand the efficacy of our current vaccine portfolio against new variants.

The Government has also established a new partnership with the vaccine manufacturer, CureVac, to rapidly develop new vaccines in response to new Covid-19 variants should this be needed. The new agreement will utilise UK expertise on genomics and virus sequencing to allow new varieties of vaccines based on messenger RNA technology to be developed quickly against new strains of Covid-19. An initial order has been made for 50 million doses.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Overseas Aid**Chris Law:**[\[180541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what criteria his Department is using to make decisions on UK Official Development Assistance funded programmes for 2021.

Amanda Solloway:

All Government Departments with responsibility for spending Official Development Assistance took part in a cross-government process, led by my Rt. Hon. Friend the First Secretary of State, to review in detail how ODA is allocated between key priorities - recognising the difficult economic circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 2nd December last year, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Chair of the International Development Committee setting out the Strategic Framework for UK ODA, which details the UK's foreign aid spending priorities. In line with these priorities, he confirmed each Department's total ODA settlement on 26th January.

We are currently working with UKRI, and all our Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners to manage the Financial Year 2021/22 ODA allocations. UKRI have written to their award holders to set out the process for reviewing ODA funding next year, and to explore options for individual programmes. (Full details have been published on the UKRI website). Ongoing GCRF and Newton Fund programme activity will be prioritised according to the Strategic Framework for UK ODA priorities.

Chris Law:[\[180542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of whether all UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes run by his Department fulfil the primary requirement that ODA supports the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

Amanda Solloway:

BEIS ODA Funds must act in compliance with the International Development Act (IDA) 2002. The primary purpose of the IDA requires that spend will help reduce poverty overseas. In parallel to ensuring my Department's ODA spend is compatible with the IDA, the spend must be in line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) rules on ODA. BEIS officials work in close contact with counterparts in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to ensure that all of our ODA spending meets this primary purpose requirement, and is accurately accounted for through the annual Statistics on International Development (SID) reporting process (published every April on gov.uk). All programmes employ relevant and robust mechanisms through programme design and implementation to ensure their primary development purpose is met.

■ Electronic Commerce

Jonathan Edwards:

[179008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of protections for consumers shopping online via (a) Facebook, (b) Twitter, (c) Instagram and (d) other social media platforms.

Paul Scully:

There is a robust legislative framework to protect consumers. This includes providing consumers the right to a refund within 14 days for most online purchase, for any reason. The Government keeps this legal framework under review to ensure consumers remain adequately protected.

Consumers should report any problems to the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133, www.citizensadvice.org/. The helpline offers free advice to consumers on their rights and can refer on complaints to Trading Standards for further appropriate enforcement action.

In order to ensure consumers have the right protections when using large digital platforms, the Government has also agreed to set up a new Digital Markets Unit in the Competition and Markets Authority. We will consult on the powers of the unit later this year.

■ Employment: Mental Health

Stuart Anderson:

[179556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that contracts of employment take into consideration the mental health needs of employees.

Paul Scully:

Under health and safety legislation, employers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees; Under equality legislation employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, which can include those with mental health needs.

The Government is working to equip employers with the knowledge and confidence to manage health and disability in the workplace. This includes advice on creating inclusive workplaces and working practices and help providing modifications and adjustments where needed to support individual employees, covering both mental and physical health conditions.

In 2019, Public Health England published a series of toolkits in partnership with Business in the Community to help every organisation support the mental and physical health of its employees. Government continues to work with Business Leaders via the 'Thriving at Work Leadership Council' to break down stigma and also promotes mental health resources available at the Mental Health at Work website. The Department for Work and Pensions' Disability Confident scheme will continue

working with employers to actively promote best practice in supporting the mental and physical health of employees.

■ Energy: Conservation

Bob Blackman:

[179041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to introduce a new scheme to incentivise energy efficiency measures in homes to help meet the Government's net zero by 2050 target.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment in financial year 21/22 for both the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme with £300 million of new funding and up to £100 million of recycled funding from the Green Homes Grant Vouchers, depending on take up.

■ Energy: Double Glazing

Bob Blackman:

[179042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the role of high efficiency glazing in residential and commercial buildings in contributing to the net zero by 2050 target.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As part of reaching Net Zero by 2050, the Clean Growth Strategy set out that all homes should reach EPC C by 2035 where cost effective, affordable, and practical. Double glazing is a popular energy efficiency measure and the English Housing Survey suggests that more than 85% of properties in England are fully double glazed, with less than 4% having no double glazing. As such, there is limited potential for further energy savings because so much of the stock already has efficient windows. Nevertheless, there are other benefits to more efficient glazing such as reduced internal noise, and improving the remaining single glazed windows would contribute to lower emissions.

Five per cent[i] of annual Non-domestic buildings energy use can be abated by fabric improvements of which we estimate around a third are glazing.

[i] Source: Building Energy Efficiency Survey, tables 4.5 and 3.1, at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-energy-efficiency-survey-bees>

■ Events Industry and Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[179519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken during the covid-19 outbreak to support small businesses that supply goods to the events and hospitality sector.

Paul Scully:

The Government has brought forward a substantial package of financial support for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Budget, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £65 billion three-point plan to provide support for jobs and businesses, including small businesses in the supply chains of the events and hospitality sectors, with extensions to furlough, self-employed support, business grants, loans and VAT cuts.

■ **Fireworks****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[178870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has any plans to restrict the use of fireworks.

Paul Scully:

There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks that controls who can purchase them, their availability and use, curfews and their safety as a product.

We agree with the conclusion of the Petition Committee's 2019 inquiry into fireworks, that any further restrictions on fireworks sold to the public by retail outlets could lead to more individuals buying products inappropriately, through online social media sources or from outside the UK. This could drive individuals to source fireworks from illegitimate or unsafe suppliers, where products may not meet the UK's safety requirements.

The Government will continue to promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme****Fleur Anderson:**[\[179624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what will replace the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Following a review, the Green Homes Grant Vouchers scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2021. We will refocus efforts and funding on alternative approaches which will maximise delivery of home retrofits for consumers who are most in need.

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment in financial year 21/22 for both the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme with £300 million of new funding and up to £100 million of recycled funding from the Green Homes Grant Vouchers, depending on take up.

All valid applications made to the voucher scheme up to 31st March 2021 will be processed, and all vouchers issued will be honoured.

Feryal Clark:

[\[179647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of closing the Green Homes Grant scheme on the Government's plans to meet its 5th Carbon Budget.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme was designed to provide a short-term economic stimulus while tackling our contribution to climate change.

In order to ensure we continue to deliver on our net zero ambitions and support a thriving building retrofit industry, the Government will be expanding its funding commitment in financial year 21/22 for both the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme with £300 million of new funding and up to £100 million of recycled funding from the Green Homes Grant Vouchers, depending on take up.

The £300 million extra funding for green home upgrades brings the total spending on energy efficiency measures to £1.3 billion, exceeding the Government's manifesto commitment of £1 billion. The scheme has clearly helped raise awareness of green home measures, and improved demand for a range of clean heat and energy saving installations.

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[182074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to replace the Green Homes Grant scheme; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that listed property owners benefit from a successor scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment in financial year 21/22 for both the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme (LAD) with £300 million of new funding.

Furthermore, £150m has already been committed to the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG), intended to support low-income households by upgrading the worst-performing off-gas-grid homes in England.

Design guidance for a further phase of LAD, and both the HUG and SHDF schemes is currently being developed. A wide range of possibilities will be examined to ensure successful delivery of the funds, through schemes which efficiently complement each other, with delivery extending into 2023.

■ **Greensill: Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

Dan Carden:

[\[181410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what due diligence he carried out when considering whether Greensill Capital should be an accredited lender under the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: The decision to accredit Greensill Capital was made independently and in accordance with the British Business Bank's (Bank) usual procedures. The Bank ran an accreditation process for lenders to participate in the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), which included due consideration of whether a prospective lender met the criteria set out in the CLBILS Request for Proposals (a publicly available document).

The criteria included requirements such as the ability to demonstrate a track record of lending to larger enterprises, provision of evidence based forecasts, the ability to demonstrate that it has sufficient capital available to meet their lending forecasts, a viable business model, robust operations and systems, the proposed lending will not have unreasonable lender levied fees and interest, and that the lender has all the necessary regulations, licences, authorisations and permissions to operate the scheme.

At the point of accreditation and based on the information provided to it, the Bank considered that Greensill Capital met the required criteria.

■ Help to Grow Programme**Matt Vickers:****[180636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the criteria are for businesses to access the Government's Help to Grow: digital scheme.

Paul Scully:

Through Help to Grow: Digital, the Government will launch a new online platform this Autumn where businesses can access advice on software that could help them save time and money, and a voucher to reduce the costs of buying that software. Over the next 3 years, 100 000 eligible SMEs could benefit from a voucher providing up to a 50% discount (worth up to £5,000) to adopt approved productivity enhancing software.

The voucher is expected to be available to UK businesses that have more than 5 and fewer than 249 employees, that have been trading for more than 12 months, and that are purchasing the discounted software for the first time.

The programme will launch in Autumn 2021 and eligible businesses are encouraged to register their interest at <https://helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk/>.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**Daisy Cooper:****[179569]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148866 on the hospitality sector, if he will make it his policy to provide financial assistance to invoice factoring schemes for suppliers in the hospitality sector.

Paul Scully:

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic the Government has provided a package of financial support to businesses, including those in the hospitality sector and suppliers to the sector. The total financial support package is over £407 billion.

Hydrogen**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[182000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 173996, what assessment his Department has made of the role of green hydrogen in its Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy set out that to be on track to deliver net zero, we expect that the minimum, in all future scenarios, is 20 TWh per year of fossil fuel use replaced with low carbon alternatives in 2030. Hydrogen, electrification and bioenergy all have a role to play, including green hydrogen. Further details will be set out in the forthcoming Hydrogen Strategy.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[182002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential to produce and use (a) green hydrogen and (b) blue hydrogen from 2021 to 2024.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK is aiming for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy, and we expect this to come from a combination of green and blue hydrogen production methods. The UK currently produces around 10 – 27TWh of hydrogen, most of which is not low carbon ('grey') for use in the petrochemical sector.

Production of large-scale blue hydrogen requires the necessary carbon capture and storage infrastructure to be in place, so we do not expect this to come forwards until the mid-2020s. The majority of low carbon hydrogen production during 2021 – 2024 is therefore likely to be green hydrogen, with end use focussed on sectors with existing demand such as transport and industry, with use in heat and power developing over time. To achieve our legally binding net zero commitments we will also need a complete switch to low carbon production, as addressed in our recent Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy.

Further details on how we will scale up production of low carbon hydrogen through the 2020s, as well as decarbonise existing grey hydrogen production, will be set out in the UK Hydrogen Strategy, which will be published in the coming months alongside further detail on the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund and business models to support hydrogen and industrial decarbonisation.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[182003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the levels of (a) green, (b) blue and (c) grey hydrogen that will be produced in the UK from 2021 to 2024.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK is aiming for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy, and we expect this to come from a combination of green and blue hydrogen production methods. The UK currently produces around 10 – 27TWh of hydrogen, most of which is not low carbon ('grey') for use in the petrochemical sector.

Production of large-scale blue hydrogen requires the necessary carbon capture and storage infrastructure to be in place, so we do not expect this to come forwards until the mid-2020s. The majority of low carbon hydrogen production during 2021 – 2024 is therefore likely to be green hydrogen, with end use focussed on sectors with existing demand such as transport and industry, with use in heat and power developing over time. To achieve our legally binding net zero commitments we will also need a complete switch to low carbon production, as addressed in our recent Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy.

Further details on how we will scale up production of low carbon hydrogen through the 2020s, as well as decarbonise existing grey hydrogen production, will be set out in the UK Hydrogen Strategy, which will be published in the coming months alongside further detail on the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund and business models to support hydrogen and industrial decarbonisation.

■ **Hydrogen: Finance**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[181999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 173996, how much of the £171 million announced by the Government for hydrogen projects in the Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy is planned to be allocated to projects that include green hydrogen.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government announced £171m of funding to support nine projects looking to decarbonise activity across five industrial clusters through the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge. Projects in Scotland, South Wales, Humberside, Teesside and the North West will all receive government support to deploy a range of low-carbon infrastructure and technologies, including but not limited to, low carbon hydrogen. The hydrogen projects supported in these cluster locations will be enabled by the development of the CO2 transport and storage network (blue hydrogen), and will in turn enable decarbonisation across the cluster in line with the objectives of the fund.

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

approach to enable both routes will drive cost effective supply volumes in the 2020s in line with our 2030 5GW ambition, whilst scaling up green hydrogen. Government support for hydrogen production, through the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund and business models is intended to support both green and blue hydrogen projects.

We will publish the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy this year which will set out the key steps needed in the 2020s to deliver our 5GW ambition and set the context for further scale up on the way to net zero, this will include further details on the role of green hydrogen.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[182001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding his Department is providing to advance green hydrogen projects; when that funding (a) started and (b) is due to end; and what the (i) names and (ii) locations are of those funded projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is providing significant amounts of support to green hydrogen projects. We are investing up to £33m to support the development of a range low carbon hydrogen supply solutions, including green hydrogen projects, through the Hydrogen Supply competition. This includes:

- o The Dolphyn project, led by ERM, received £3.1m to develop green hydrogen production from floating offshore wind. The project is due to complete in summer 2021.
- o The Gigastack project, led by ITM Power, received £7.5m to further the development of hydrogen production by Polymer Electrolyte Membrane electrolysis. The project is due to complete in summer 2021.
- o Four projects received funding to complete green hydrogen feasibility studies, which were completed in 2019.
- o Phase 1 of the Green Distilleries Competition has funded a variety of hydrogen projects to complete a feasibility study on their technology. Nine of the 17 feasibility studies funded at Phase 1 are for low carbon hydrogen-related projects, including a novel electrolyser for the production of hydrogen

The forthcoming £240m Net-Zero Hydrogen Fund is intended to support both green and blue hydrogen production. We will be consulting on the design of the fund alongside publication of the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy set to be published in Q2 of this year. We will also be considering what support is required for green hydrogen as part of developing long term, sustainable business models and the revenue mechanism, to stimulate private investment in new low carbon projects.

■ Industry: Carbon Emissions

Martyn Day:

[\[180555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support industrial decarbonisation now that the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Initiative has closed to new applicants.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is committed to supporting industry with the ambitious decarbonisation needed to deliver on the Net Zero target. The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, published in March, explains our approach

We will align the UK Emissions Trading Scheme cap to be consistent with Net Zero, and are considering mechanisms to further strengthen the UK ETS and the Climate Change Agreements scheme. We are also investing in decarbonisation technologies through the £1bn CCUS Infrastructure Fund, £289m Industrial Energy Transformation Fund and £240m Net Zero Hydrogen Fund. We continue to develop business models to incentivise industrial CCUS and low-carbon hydrogen. We will also propose new measures to support the growth of the market for low carbon products.

The NDRHI closed to new applicants on 31st March 2021. However, several hundred projects will continue to be built, with commissioning deadlines of 31st March 2022.

■ Insolvency

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[180554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to create a single, independent regulatory body for insolvency practitioners before his power to do so expires in 2022 in accordance with the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015.

Paul Scully:

The Government has conducted a call for evidence on Insolvency Practitioner regulation, which included seeking evidence and views on possible reforms of the regulatory framework. The Government will publish its response in due course.

■ Just Eat: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper:

[\[178941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will assist the hon. Member for West Lancashire in securing a response from the Chief Executive of Just Eat plc, to a letter dated 18 January 2021 on outstanding payments to a constituent, reference ZA55172.

Paul Scully:

The Department has no record of being sighted on the letter dated 18 January 2021 from the Hon. Member for West Lancashire to Just Eat PLC.

■ Local Restrictions Support Grant: Complementary Medicine**Gareth Thomas:**[\[178776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether providers of complementary medicine teaching who have been unable to deliver practical training in close contact services since 5 January 2021 are eligible to apply for Local Restrictions Support Grants; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support for businesses that are required to close, or which are severely affected by the restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant provided grants of up to the equivalent of £4,500 for each 6 weeks of closure for those businesses mandated to close during the National Restrictions. Local Authorities are responsible for managing grants schemes locally and determining eligibility.

For those businesses who did not qualify for the Local Restrictions Support Grant further support maybe available through the Additional Restrictions Grant. The Chancellor has announced an additional £425m will be made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant meaning that more than £2bn has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020. Local Authorities are free to provide support that suits their local area including to support those businesses not required to close but which have had their trade severely affected by the restrictions.

■ Local Restrictions Support Grant: Golf**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[178872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of adding golf club and premise to the businesses that are eligible to receive the Local Restrictions Support Grant.

Paul Scully:

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed), closed for new applications on 31st March. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Budget that from 1st April one-off Restart Grants of up to £6,000 for non-essential retail and up to £18,000 for hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation businesses will be available to support them to reopen as Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed.

Where a business does not meet this criteria, they may be eligible for further grant support via the Additional Restrictions Grant a discretionary scheme, administered by Local Authorities. Local Authorities are free to provide support that suits their local area including to support those businesses not required to close but which have had their trade severely affected by the restrictions. The Chancellor has announced an additional £425m will be made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant meaning that more than £2bn has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020.

Local Authorities are responsible for the administration of all Grant Schemes and queries regarding eligibility should be made locally.

■ **Maternity Leave and Maternity Pay**

Sir Alan Campbell:

[\[178738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress his Department has made on increasing neonatal (a) pay and (b) leave.

Paul Scully:

In 2019, we consulted on proposals to introduce a new entitlement to paid leave for employed parents of babies who require neonatal care. In March last year, we published the Government response to the consultation and committed to introducing Neonatal Leave and Pay.

The entitlement will apply to parents of babies who are admitted into hospital up to the age of 28 days, and who have a continuous stay in hospital of 7 days or more. The period of leave and pay available to parents will be capped at 12 weeks. Neonatal Leave will be a 'day 1' right, available to an employee from the first day of employment in their job.

We will bring forward legislation to introduce Neonatal Leave and Pay as part of the Employment Bill when Parliamentary time allows.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[178946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 12 February 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on support programmes for those who heat their homes using oil, reference ZA55510.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Callanan, wrote to the Hon. Member on 14 April 2021 about support for households to reduce energy bills.

■ **Minerals: Manufacturing Industries**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[179709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will make an assessment of the effect of the rules of origin provisions in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on critical mineral supply chains for downstream original equipment manufacturers based in the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As we set out in our [Integrated Review](#) last month, our priority actions include, "to diversify the UK's supply in critical goods, such as medical equipment and rare earth elements, through trade partnerships and international collaboration... Within the UK,

we will continue to explore opportunities around domestic extraction and processing of critical minerals, such as lithium, as well as their recovery, recycling and reuse to establish a viable circular economy".

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU came into effect on 1 January 2021. Original equipment manufacturers across a range of sectors have welcomed the deal, and the Government worked closely with industry before and during the negotiation to develop tailored rules of origin.

For example, critical mineral supply chains are important for the electric vehicle supply chain. Provisions on rules of origin include a transitional period for electrified vehicles and batteries, which allows manufacturers flexibility to meet rules of origin requirements while local supply chains develop.

■ Night-time Economy: West Yorkshire

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[178801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to provide specific support to the night-time economy in (a) Huddersfield and (b) West Yorkshire.

Paul Scully:

The Government has brought forward a substantial package of financial support for businesses, including those in the night time economy, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included an additional £300 million added to the £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund. At the Budget, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced further support measures with extensions to the furlough scheme, self-employed support, business grants, and loans.

■ Offshore Industry: Environment Protection

Alan Brown:

[179237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to provide a progress update on implementation of the North Sea Transition Deal ahead of the COP26 summit in addition to the scheduled reporting in March 2022 as outlined in that Deal.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We will provide progress updates on the implementation of the North Sea Transition Deal to the North Sea Transition Forum in both April and October 2021, ahead of COP26. The North Sea Transition Forum is hosted and chaired by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) and is the tripartite body which provides senior government and industry leadership for the offshore oil and gas industry. It is attended by ministers and officials from both the UK and Scottish governments, trade unions, regulators and senior representatives from the upstream oil and gas industry. The minutes of the Forum are published on the OGA website.

■ Post Office: Fujitsu

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[178869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the recent report in Computer Weekly on the extension of the Post Office Horizon contact with Fujitsu, whether representatives of the Government, in their roles as members of the Post Office Ltd (POL) Board or other POL committees or otherwise, were (a) in attendance at meetings with Fujitsu and (b) involved in the decision to extend the contract with that company to 2024.

Paul Scully:

Post Office Limited has extended its current contract with Fujitsu for a short period to allow sufficient time to develop its long-term IT strategy, including the approach to any IT system that it will use in the long-term. This was considered the appropriate commercial decision by Post Office Limited. Government representatives were not present at Post Office Limited's meetings with Fujitsu to discuss the extension. The Government representative on the POL Board – UKGI's Shareholder Non-Executive Director – was involved in the collective Board decision to extend the contract at the March 2021 Board meeting.

■ Renewable Energy

Martyn Day:

[\[180556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support the development and roll-out of (a) bioenergy with carbon capture and storage and (b) other negative emissions technologies.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government's priority is to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities and adapt to those impacts that are unavoidable.

Negative emissions from technologies such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) may be required to balance residual emissions from some of the most difficult to decarbonise sectors, such as agriculture and aviation. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) recommend deploying BECCS in the UK at a potential rate of 53 MtCO₂/yr by 2050.

Through the Carbon Capture and Storage Infrastructure Fund, the UK Government will provide at least £800 million pounds to establish carbon capture and storage in at least two UK clusters, one by the mid-2020s and another by 2030.

We are taking action to support innovation and strengthen our understanding of GGRs before moving forward with deployment. In June 2020, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister committed up to £100 million funding to research and develop Direct Air Capture technologies in the UK. As part of this, BEIS launched phase 1 of the Direct Air Capture and other GGRs innovation competition in November, which seeks to support the development of GGR technologies to help them achieve commercialisation.

■ Research: Finance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[180491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to encourage private sector investment in high risk high reward research in the UK.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government has set out plans at Spending Review to cement the UK's status as a global leader in science and innovation by investing £14.9 billion in R&D in 2021/22. This investment supports our commitments set out in the R&D Roadmap as we build towards UK R&D investment of 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

Leveraging investment from the private sector will be vital to reach the 2.4% target and achieve our ambitions for innovation. The Government has already set out at Budget a range of measures to boost private investment in research and development, including a review of R&D tax reliefs, supported by a consultation with stakeholders, and £375 million to introduce Future Fund: Breakthrough, a new direct co-investment product to support the scale up of the most innovative, R&D-intensive businesses.

The Government is also establishing the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA), focusing exclusively on high-risk, high-reward research with a budget of £800m up to 2024/25. ARIA projects will be able to attract private co-financing as part of a new and creative approach to funding.

These developments will complement our existing incentives for private R&D investment and, as the Plan for Growth set out at Budget, BEIS will also publish an Innovation Strategy this summer with a view to providing the private sector the confidence to invest as we look to Build Back Better.

■ Restart Grant Scheme

Matt Vickers:

[\[180639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the criteria are for businesses to access the full Restart Grant of £6,000.

Paul Scully:

A non-essential retail business may be eligible for Stand One of the Restart Grant Scheme, receiving payments of up to £6,000. A non-essential retail business can be defined as a business that is used mainly or wholly for the purposes of retail sale or hire of goods or services by the public, where the primary purpose of products or services provided are not necessary to the health and well-being of the public.

Local Authorities may use the following criteria to assess whether a business is eligible for a grant under this threshold:

- Businesses offering in-person non-essential retail to the general public.

- Businesses that were likely to have been required to cease their retail operation in the January 2021 lockdown.
- Businesses that had retail services restricted during January lockdown.
- Businesses that sell directly to consumers.

For those business who qualify as non-essential retail the following thresholds apply:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15,000 or under: £2,667;
- For properties with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000: £4,000;
- For properties with a rateable value of £51,000 or over: £6,000.

Local Authorities are responsible for the administration of Restart Grants and determining eligibility.

Further information on eligibility for the Restart Grant can be found at GOV.UK:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971363/restart-grant-la-guidance.pdf.

Matt Vickers:

[180640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what businesses will be regarded as non-essential businesses and allowed to access the Restart Grants.

Paul Scully:

Local Authorities are responsible for determining if a business qualifies as non-essential and therefore eligible for the Restart Grant payment. A non-essential retail business can be defined as a business that is used mainly or wholly for the purposes of retail sale or hire of goods or services by the public, where the primary purpose of products or services provided are not necessary to the health and well-being of the public.

Local Authorities may use the following criteria to assess whether a business is eligible for a grant under this threshold:

- Businesses offering in-person non-essential retail to the general public.
- Businesses that were likely to have been required to cease their retail operation in the January 2021 lockdown.
- Businesses that had retail services restricted during January lockdown.
- Businesses that sell directly to consumers.

Local Authorities are advised to use their local expertise to evaluate the eligibility of a claim. If a business does not qualify for the Restart Grant further support is available through the Additional Restrictions Grant, a discretionary scheme. Local Authorities are free to provide support that suits their local area including to support those businesses not required to close but which have had their trade severely affected by restrictions or who do not qualify under the mandatory schemes.

■ Small Businesses: Advisory Services

Colleen Fletcher:

[180523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to provide (a) advice, (b) support and (c) services for small business owners in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England planning on developing their businesses during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

An unprecedented package of support for businesses has been in place since March 2020, including measures such as loans, grants, and tax deferrals to support businesses required to close or severely affected by restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19.

The Spring Budget 2021 set out the next phase of the Government's response, providing additional support worth £65 billion to help businesses get going again. This includes Restart grants and Recovery Loans to help businesses plan ahead and safely relaunch trading as restrictions are relaxed, extension of the furlough scheme and support for the self-employed. Extension of VAT reductions and business rates relief are also part of this package, whilst the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) continues to enable local authorities to put in place discretionary business support that suits their local area.

The Start Up Loan Scheme, part of the government-backed British Business Bank, was launched in 2012 and offers free mentoring and low-interest personal loans to help start or grow new business. Entrepreneurs in the UK can borrow up to £25,000 in their first 24 months of business, repaying over 5 years. In the financial year 2020/21 to the end of February, the programme has made 19 Start Up loans worth £264,500 in the Coventry North East constituency, and in the West Midlands has made 110 loans worth £964,353. In the UK, a total of 10,251 loans have been made worth £123,598,056 over the same period.

The Government's new 'Help to Grow' scheme will help small businesses across the UK learn new skills, reach new customers and boost profits. Starting in June, small businesses will be able to access Help to Grow: Management, a 12 week-programme delivered by leading business schools across the UK. The programme will combine a practical curriculum, with 1:1 support from a business mentor, peer-learning sessions and an alumni network. In the Autumn, government will launch Help to Grow: Digital, a new online platform where businesses can access advice on software that could help them save time and money while running their businesses, and a voucher to discount software.

Businesses that have been unable to access support, or who are unsure about the support available, can contact their nearest Business Growth Hub for advice. The Government has established a network of 38 of these hubs, led by each Local Enterprise Partnership in England, where expert advisers can offer impartial tailored advice to firms of any size. Contact details are available at:

www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/.

The Business Support Helpline offers free impartial advice to businesses across England (FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098).

■ Voucher Schemes

Munira Wilson:

[\[179583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to introduce a five year expiry period on gift cards and vouchers.

Paul Scully:

The Department asked the Law Commission to examine the protection given to consumer prepayments, including gift cards and vouchers, and consider whether such protections should be strengthened. The Law Commission concluded that that there was no need to introduce additional measures for gift cards and vouchers including in relation to expiry dates.

■ Weddings: Insurance

Daisy Cooper:

[\[179570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will establish a Government-backed pandemic insurance scheme for wedding (a) businesses and (b) consumers.

Paul Scully:

Since March of last year we have provided an unprecedented package of financial support to the economy, including the wedding sector, which we keep under regular review.

The Government recognises the essential role of the insurance industry in providing the cover businesses need to operate. We are working closely with insurers, trade bodies and regulators to understand what more the industry can do to support individuals and businesses.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Africa: G7

Ruth Jones:

[\[180610\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which African Governments will be represented at the upcoming G7 summit.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Prime Minister has invited his South African counterpart President Cyril Ramaphosa to attend the G7 Leaders' Summit in Cornwall as a guest.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Philip Davies:** [\[180454\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of people have died within 28 days of receiving a covid-19 vaccination; and whether those people will all be considered to have died as a result of that vaccination.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSAs response to PQ180454 [UKSA's final response to PQ180454 .pdf]

■ Freedom of Information: Prosecutions**Dan Carden:** [\[182093\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of extending the six-month time limit for prosecution of offences under section 77 of the Freedom of Information Act on levels of compliance with that Act.

Chloe Smith:

This Government will continue to consider the recommendations made for reform of section 77 of the Act.

■ UK Relations with EU: Parliamentary Scrutiny**Felicity Buchan:** [\[180632\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making regular statements to the House on progress on (a) the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol and (b) further discussions with the EU on that matter.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government recognises the importance of keeping Parliament updated on the Northern Ireland Protocol and on further discussions with the EU. We have done so consistently. We will continue to work constructively and transparently with Parliament on issues relating to the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee, including by continuing to lay Written Ministerial Statements before and after each Joint Committee meeting.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations****Layla Moran:****[181107]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to withdraw remaining UK armed forces from Afghanistan by 11 September 2021.

James Heappey:

NATO partners, including the UK, confirmed on 14 April that an orderly and coordinated withdrawal of NATO forces will begin by May 2021. As NATO partners made clear, we expect our forces will leave Afghanistan within a few months.

The UK's military, diplomatic and development efforts over the past 19 years have been critical in reducing the threat from Al Qaeda and helping to build the foundations on which peace can be achieved.

Alongside our Allies we have started a peace process, built and equipped security institutions, trained thousands of Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, and supported elections to help the Afghan people determine their own future.

We will always remember those that have fought and sacrificed to protect the rights and freedoms that Afghans have come to enjoy.

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Repairs and Maintenance**Stephen Morgan:****[182094]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on repairing fire damage aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Jeremy Quin:

Minor repairs required as a result of fire damage are conducted as part of routine fleet maintenance activity. There has been no fire-related repair activity separate to this.

■ Ministry of Defence: Hunting**Luke Pollard:****[179528]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of suspending licences for trail hunting on land owned by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Ben Wallace:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: No assessment has been made of the possibility of suspending licenses for trail hunting.

■ Nuclear Weapons: Costs**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[182118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, what estimate he has made of the cost of the additional nuclear warheads.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Members for Brighton, Pavilion and Glasgow South on 13 April 2021 to Questions 174806 and 175921.

Attachments:

1. 174806 - Nuclear Weapons [174806 - Nuclear Weapons.docx]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Advertising: Internet****Bob Blackman:**[\[181244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to bring forward legislation on his Department's Online Advertising Programme.

Caroline Dinenage:

My department has been considering how online advertising is regulated through its Online Advertising Programme, and will be consulting on this issue later this year. The government will set out its plans in the consultation.

Our aim is to foster fair, accountable and ethical online advertising that works for citizens, businesses and society as a whole. In particular, we want to ensure standards about the placement and content of advertising can be effectively applied and enforced online so that consumers have limited exposure to harmful or misleading advertising.

Bob Blackman:[\[181245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Online Advertising Programme will publish its public consultation, following its call for evidence in 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

My department has been considering how online advertising is regulated through our Online Advertising Programme, and we will be consulting on this issue later this year following an initial call for evidence in 2019.

Our aim is to foster fair, accountable and ethical online advertising that works for citizens, businesses, and society as a whole. In particular, we want to ensure standards about the placement and content of advertising can be effectively applied and enforced online so that consumers are protected from harmful or misleading advertising.

Bob Blackman:

[\[181246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he plans to take to give online platforms a legal responsibility for preventing, identifying and removing content that leads to pensions scams from their sites.

Caroline Dinenage:

The growth and scale of online pensions scams, and online fraud more broadly, is deeply concerning. The Government is working tirelessly with industry, regulators and consumer groups to tackle fraud. We are also considering additional legislative and non-legislative solutions to effectively address the harms posed by all elements of online fraud in a cohesive and robust way.

My Department is considering how online advertising is regulated through its Online Advertising Programme. This work will look at ensuring that standards about the placement and content of advertising are effectively applied and enforced online to reduce consumers' exposure to harmful or misleading advertising. This work will look at the role advertising can play in enabling online fraud and help inform our future efforts to tackle it. We will be consulting on this issue later this year.

■ **Ancient Monuments: Repairs and Maintenance**

Sally-Ann Hart:

[\[181160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what measures are in place to ensure that Historic England can compel owners of ancient monuments, which are on the at risk register, to repair and keep in good order those ruins and buildings.

Caroline Dinenage:

Historic England has no powers to compel the owners of Scheduled Ancient Monuments to keep them in good order, however its Heritage At Risk Repair Grants budget can help fund the repair and conservation of those that have been included on its Heritage at Risk Register. It can also fund activities that help to reduce or avoid related risks.

■ **Artificial Intelligence: International Cooperation**

Darren Jones:

[R] [\[179368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the work programme of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence; what the UK's contribution is to that partnership; and if he will make a statement.

Matt Warman:

As a founding member, the UK has been a key part of the Global Partnership on AI (GPAI) and has helped drive this initiative forward.

- GPAI is progressing projects across its Working Groups; Data Governance, Innovation and Commercialisation, Future of Work, Responsible AI and AI and Pandemic Response.

- Initial reports can be found on the new GPAI website (<https://gpai.ai/>), as well as presentations from the first multi stakeholder summit in December 2020. Work is now focusing on a few key projects in each area.
- UK representatives have contributed their valuable inputs and expertise to these workstreams and a number of experts also sit on the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, including the current co-chair Joanna Shields, CEO of BenevolentAI.
- GPAI also welcomed four new members in December 2020; Brazil, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain - and there is interest from multiple other countries to join in the future.

The UK looks forward to continuing work with international partners to ensure GPAI fosters responsible development of AI grounded in principles of human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation and economic growth on a global level.

■ Arts Council England: Grants

Andrew Rosindell:

[181201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether funding from the Arts Council which is allocated to unwanted community projects is in breach of the Arts Council Management Agreement 2016-20.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS has a Management Agreement with Arts Council, England (ACE) which sets out the priorities ACE must work towards and the metrics which will be used to monitor their performance. These Management Agreements exist between DCMS and all its Arms Length Bodies.

ACE makes decisions about which organisations and projects to fund through their core funding settlement independently of government and Ministers, which means there is no question of political involvement in cultural funding decisions.

ACE assesses grant applications against a range of criteria including quality, public engagement, finance and management, activity types, disciplines, applicants and geographical areas. ACE has a strong track record of delivering funding to the arts and culture sector, and decisions are informed by local knowledge and expertise.

If you are concerned about a particular funding decision you can find advice on making a complaint or raising concerns about an organisation that has received funding from ACE at <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/making-complaint>

■ Culture and Sports: Coronavirus

Chris Green:

[181008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will bring forward proposals to classify sporting and cultural venues as vital national infrastructure under schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has no current plans to revise the list of sectors designated as critical national infrastructure.

Schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 confers powers to the Secretary of State to prohibit or restrict events or gatherings in England. This includes imposing restrictions on the persons entering or remaining on the premises. These regulations are not applicable to any changes in the list of sectors designated as critical national infrastructure.

The government has worked to protect cultural and sporting venues during the lockdown to save sports facilities, theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues for future generations. In July 2020, MHCLG announced changes to the planning system to protect buildings that are an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage. This move was announced alongside the £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage sector and provide extra security to businesses as they plan to reopen their premises when it is safe to do so.

The government has also provided £1.8 billion of public support to the sport sector in response to the pandemic to ensure facilities are able to reopen when it is safe for them to do so.

Electricity Interconnectors: Portsmouth**Stephen Morgan:**[\[182095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what restrictions he plans to place on third party access to the data infrastructure contained in the proposed AQUIND subsea interconnector; and if he will make a statement.

Matt Warman:

The AQUIND subsea interconnector project is in the early planning stage. DCMS works with industry to manage the development of the UK's submarine cable network including assessing and mitigating the physical, personnel, and cyber risks involved.

Events Industry: Finance**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[181388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support is available to events and exhibition businesses (a) currently and (b) between 15 April 2021 and the end of 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has extended a number of financial support schemes, which events businesses can continue to access well into 2021.

Events and exhibition businesses will continue to be able to apply for Government support during this period, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended until September. Events businesses can apply for a variety of generous Government backed loan schemes, including the Recovery Loan scheme

from 6 April. In addition, the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant guidance for Local Authorities specifically refers to mobile businesses and suppliers in the events sector.

We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Tourism Industry Council and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to monitor the situation facing the sector.

■ Football: Reviews

Julie Elliott:

[182047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to announce the Government's fan-led review of football.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs form a vital part of our local communities and must be protected. The Secretary of State announced the launch of the fan-led review of football governance in the House of Commons on 19th April 2021.

We will publish the Terms of Reference imminently but I can confirm that it will be chaired by the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford.

■ Museums and Galleries: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire:

[181321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to publish guidelines on the ventilation of galleries, museums and other cultural venues open to the public ahead of their reopening as covid-19 restrictions ease.

Caroline Dinenage:

Public Health England has published guidance on the ventilation of indoor spaces which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

The Health and Safety Executive has published guidance on ventilation and air conditioning here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm>

There are no plans for the Government to publish separate guidelines on ventilation of galleries and museums and other cultural venues; however, such venues are advised to have due regard to the published guidance together with the Art Council England's Government Indemnity Scheme advice, which can be found here: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/protecting-cultural-objects/government-indemnity-scheme#section-1>

Good practice guidance for reopening museums published by the National Museum Directors' Council with support from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport can be found here:

<https://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/coronavirus-update/nmdc-good-practice-guidelines-opening-museums/>

■ Music: EU Countries

Ms Harriet Harman: [180908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on negotiating a cultural exemption to cabotage rules for music tours in the EU.

Ms Harriet Harman: [180909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on negotiating exemptions for musical instruments and equipment related to touring from carnet and CITES requirements within the EU.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government recognises the importance of touring to the creative and cultural sectors, and is committed to helping them navigate the new rules under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

The UK pressed for a special derogation from the cabotage restrictions for hauliers carrying equipment for the purpose of concert tours and similar activities. The EU rejected this. DCMS and the Department of Transport are working with the industry to understand the implications of the new rules and discuss options for support.

With regards to carnet and CITES requirements, the management of EU import and export procedures is the responsibility of the customs authorities of the Member States, so it is important that individuals or businesses confirm the processes at their port of arrival and any conditions or procedures that may apply. However, it is worth noting that a carnet is not required for musicians with accompanied instruments (carried or taken with the individual in personal baggage or a vehicle) travelling between Great Britain and the EU. If not accompanied (carried as freight) then customs formalities (through a declaration or use of a carnet) will be required.

Officials in the Border and Protocol Delivery Group (BPDG) are engaging with custom authorities as needed if issues arise. DCMS will work with BPDG and the sector to address issues facing musicians.

■ Music: Exports

Ms Harriet Harman: [180913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has plans to establish a Music Export Office.

Caroline Dinenage:

We're working urgently across government and with the industry, including through the DCMS-led working group, on plans to support the creative sectors tour in Europe. This includes producing new guidance to help artists understand what's required in different countries, and looking carefully at proposals for a new Export Office that could provide further practical help.

■ Musicians: EU Countries**Ms Harriet Harman:**[\[180910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to create a music touring fund to support UK musicians touring in the EU until reciprocal visa and permit-free touring rights have been negotiated.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government recognises the world-leading position of the UK performing arts sector and the rich breadth of artistic talent across the UK.

We understand the sector's concerns about the new arrangements since leaving the EU and we are committed to supporting them as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes.

We are now working urgently across government and in collaboration with the creative and cultural sectors, including through the DCMS-led working group, on plans to support them to tour in Europe. We are considering a number of options to ensure performers, musicians and artists have the support they need to tour and work in countries across the EU. This includes producing new guidance to help artists understand what's required in different countries, and looking carefully at proposals for a new Export Office that could provide further practical help. We will set out next steps in due course.

Ms Harriet Harman:[\[180912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish (a) the details of the EU's offer to the UK for touring musicians during the negotiations on the UK leaving the EU, (b) the details of the UK's offer to the EU during those negotiations and (c) all correspondence between the EU and the UK related to negotiations on that matter.

Caroline Dinenage:

This Government recognises the importance of the UK's thriving cultural industries, and that is why it pushed for ambitious arrangements to make it easier for performers and artists to perform across Europe as part of the negotiations on our future relationship with the EU.

This Government proposed to the EU that UK cultural professionals, and their technical staff, be added to the list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors in the entry and temporary stay chapter of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This would have allowed UK cultural professionals and their staff to travel

and perform in the EU more easily, without needing work-permits. These proposals were rejected by the EU.

Whilst both sides published their draft proposals for the future relationship, neither side published their draft schedules for the services and investment title – which included the list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors – prior to the agreement's conclusion. Publishing correspondence and details exchanged between parties related to the development of legal text for trade agreements during the course of the negotiation would not be appropriate, as both parties exchanged this information in confidence.

■ National Citizen Service Trust: Costs

Cat Smith:

[\[182066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the full cost of unrecovered monies spent on the National Citizens Services in 2019-20.

Matt Warman:

The NCS programme is delivered by the National Citizen Service Trust, whose annual report and financial statements for the financial year 2019/20 are publicly available. NCST received a £158.6m grant-in-aid from DCMS in 2019/20. Other income amounted to £3.54m and total expenditure for the year was £156.4m.

As noted in NCST's 2019/20 Annual Report, the Summer 2020 NCS Programme was officially cancelled because of Covid-19 on 7 April 2020, by which point NCST had paid out £3.6m worth of non-refundable deposits to 44 accommodation venues. A further three accommodation suppliers were further due £3.8m in non-refundable deposits.

These payments were disclosed as events after the reporting date in NCST's 2019/20 accounts but will be accounted for in 2020-21 accounts because accommodation costs are treated as prepayments. As well as settling contractual commitments for 2020 accommodation, NCST was also able to negotiate, at no additional cost, a break from the second and third year of multi-year accommodation contracts, thereby reducing the future accommodation costs for NCST and the taxpayer.

Covid-19 restrictions meant that NCST was unable to offer its usual residential programme in 2020 but NCST worked with its core programme providers to repurpose the funds already committed to deliver an alternative programme, including digital content, volunteering opportunities and support within schools and colleges. Additionally, service user contributions received by NCST for young people to attend the Summer 2020 programme were refunded.

Cat Smith:

[\[182067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the full cost of the unfilled places of the National Citizens Service in 2019-20.

Matt Warman:

As detailed in the National Citizen Service Trust's Annual Report for the financial year 2019/20, the impact of Covid-19 has meant that NCST are unable to calculate standard value for money metrics on a financial year basis due to the cancellation of the Summer 2020 programme. Instead, NCST measured their performance on cost of unfilled places on a calendar year basis.

As stated in NCST's Annual Report 2019/20, costs of unfilled places fell year on year from £9.5m in 2018 to £5.0m in 2019. This spend went to NCST's network of Delivery Partners (mostly made up of non-profit youth sector organisations), who the Trust gives part of their revenue upfront to support preparatory activities such as running recruitment events and hiring programme staff.

The revised supplier contracts from 2020 onwards have been designed to minimise the risks of the Trust paying for places which are not filled in future. Furthermore, centralised booking of accommodation will enable the Trust to improve payment terms and minimise unfilled bed costs.

■ Sports: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[180432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has undertaken an equality impact assessment of the effect of introducing a covid-19 vaccine passport on people being able to enter outdoor sporting events.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is reviewing COVID-status certification, which is being led by the Cabinet Office. The Government has consulted widely to understand the equalities impacts, speaking to ethicists and representatives of disabilities, ethnic minorities and faith groups. The Government will continue to invite views about possible equalities impacts as we continue to assess the potential role of certification.

The Government is looking at how we can allow venues to reopen as part of the Events Research Programme (ERP) led by my department. The ERP's pilots will gather evidence associated with different settings and approaches to managing and mitigating transmission risk. The pilots will explore how different approaches to social distancing, ventilation and test-on-entry protocols could ease opening and maximise participation.

The department takes its responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) seriously, and as such a separate PSED assessment will be completed ahead of each of the pilot events in the research programme, to ensure the equality impacts of the programme on groups with a protected characteristic are fully considered. This will include an equality assessment of the use of COVID-status certification where this is trialled as part of the specified pilot.

We will ensure that the results gathered from research programmes are fed into policy development swiftly to ensure data is used to inform decisions around further reopening, including of sporting events.

■ St George's Day

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to celebrate St. Georges Day on 23 April 2021.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to promote celebrations for the upcoming St. Georges Day on the 23 April 2021.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to promote the importance of celebrating St. Georges day.

Caroline Dinenage:

Arts Council England, a DCMS Arm's Length Body, is supporting a number of organisations across the country who will be running events including York Castle Museum which will be running a virtual St George's Day on their social media including sharing St George related objects from the Museum's collections.

My department continues to promote the importance of celebrating St George's Day through its flag flying policy for designated days which encourages the flying of the Union Flag on UK Government Buildings.

St George's Day is a designated day. UK Government Buildings, where they have more than one flag pole, are also encouraged to fly the Cross of St George alongside the Union Flag. Individuals, local authorities and other organisations may fly the Cross of St George if they wish.

■ Tourism

James Wild: [\[181454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to launch the application process for tourism zones.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK Government will publish a Tourism Recovery Plan in the Spring. Given the significant impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, we now face different challenges to when the Tourism Sector Deal was published. The Recovery Plan will build on the foundations of the Sector Deal and will assess where its strategic priorities - including those linked to Tourism Zones - fit within these plans.

■ Wembley Stadium: Coronavirus

Gareth Thomas: [\[181182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the spread of covid-19 infections of thousands of football fans travelling to the Carabao cup final; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Events Research Programme (ERP) aims to examine the risk of transmission of Covid-19 from attendance at events and explore ways to enable people to attend a range of events safely. To achieve this, the programme will explore how a combination of testing and non-pharmaceutical interventions (actions that people can take to mitigate the spread of coronavirus) can inform decisions on safely lifting restrictions at events

Public safety is our main priority and decisions will be guided by a Science Board of relevant experts including senior PHE representation, who will take into account the latest public health data. All pilots will be designed in a scientifically controlled way, with special consideration to reduce risk of transmission.

Entry will be subject to a negative test result. In practice this will work in much the same way that international travel has taken place in recent months - entry will be denied to those that cannot provide evidence of a negative test result.

The majority of attendees who attend the ERP events will be local to the venue. However attendees with valid ERP tickets can travel to the event in line with HMG guidance. We have already published a public notice on ERP which includes HMG guidance [here](#).

EDUCATION**■ Sixth Form Education: Coronavirus****Mr Jonathan Lord:****[182045]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help sixth form students recover from the disruption to their education that has resulted from the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

We recognise that extended school and college restrictions due to COVID-19 have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning and we are committed to helping all pupils make up learning lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have made available £1.7 billion in funding to support education recovery. In June 2020, we announced a £1 billion catch-up package, including a National Tutoring Programme and a catch-up premium for this academic year. In February 2021, we committed to further funding of £700 million to fund summer schools, expansion of our tutoring programmes and a Recovery Premium for the next academic year. This funding specifically included a £102 million extension of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for a further year to support more students in English, maths and other vocational and academic subjects whose learning has been impacted most severely by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Tuition Fund is specific to 16 to 19 year old learners and is supporting thousands of eligible students across England to catch up and improve retention and attainment during the COVID-19 outbreak. There is good evidence of the value of small group provision in supporting learners to recover lost learning. The fund allows for this support for those studying English and maths and in elements of technical or academic study programmes helping them to address gaps in knowledge required for 16-19 qualifications.

It is essential that the fund focuses on those young people whose learning has been impacted most severely by the COVID-19 outbreak. This is why we have focused on those young people who are at significant disadvantage and who need the most support. Within the eligible cohort, providers will have discretion to target those students who need support most. Provider institutions will decide whether to opt into the scheme.

We have also appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on the development of a long-term recovery plan. Sir Kevan will engage with parents, pupils, students and teachers in the development of this broader approach. He will also review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact that the COVID-19 outbreak has had on learning to ensure pupils and students, including those aged 16 to 19, are not disadvantaged disproportionately as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution: Standards

Jim Shannon:

[180501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to put in place stricter guidelines to ensure that the UK meets its Clean Air Target.

Rebecca Pow:

Our Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action for England to reduce air pollution from a wide range of sources. Our Environment Bill makes a clear commitment to set a legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter and enables local authorities to take more effective action to tackle air pollution in their areas. We have also put in place a £3.8 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

Air quality is a devolved matter and each of the Devolved Administrations have their own policy programmes in place.

■ Bees: Imports

Ben Lake:

[\[180582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 31 March 2021 to Question 174243, what steps he is taking to control the risk of small hive beetle being imported from the EU to Great Britain via Northern Ireland.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises that some beekeepers are concerned about the new trading arrangements and the risks of exotic pests entering Great Britain, in particular Small hive beetle.

Small hive beetle would present a serious threat to our honey bees if it were to arrive in the UK. This invasive pest has only been detected in one part of Europe, namely southern Italy, and exports of bees from the affected region into either Great Britain or Northern Ireland are not permitted.

Imports of honey bees into any part of the UK are only accepted from approved countries, and are subject to rules relating to notification and health certification to ensure that imports are free of key pests and diseases.

Movements of honey bee queens, packages and colonies from Northern Ireland to Great Britain remain permitted. There is, and will remain, unfettered access for Northern Ireland goods including honey bees to the rest of the UK market.

We continue to work with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations as part of our monitoring of the new trading arrangements.

■ Chemicals: Dumping

Ruth Jones:

[\[180606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to prevent the dumping of chemical products on the UK market that do not meet EU standards and protections.

Rebecca Pow:

The domestic legislation we have put in place since leaving the EU provides for the safe management and control of chemicals, and enables us to respond to emerging risks. The UK is committed to maintaining an effective regulatory system which safeguards human health and the environment. This commitment is supported by the Environment Bill and the Government's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than when we inherited it.

The action we are taking at a domestic level will be underpinned by our continued commitment to international agreements concerning chemicals, including the Rotterdam, Basel, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions.

■ Dangerous Dogs

Sarah Olney:

[\[182076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing penalties for dog owners whose dog attacks wildlife.

Victoria Prentis:

There are already several potential penalties available to deal with dog owners who do not keep their animals under control.

It is an offence under section 3(1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to allow a dog to be dangerously out of control. Under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 a magistrates' court may make any Order they consider appropriate to require an owner to ensure that their dog is kept under proper control. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 also includes specific measures to enable the police and local authorities to tackle irresponsible dog ownership.

Defra has also commissioned research in collaboration with Middlesex University to consider the effectiveness of current dog control measures. The report is currently being peer reviewed and will be finalised in light of peer review comments. Our intention is to publish the final report later this year.

■ Delivery Services: Environment Protection

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[180398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the environment of fleet vehicles fitted with industrial refrigeration units.

Rebecca Pow:

Tailpipe emissions from vehicles which power transport refrigeration units are recorded as road traffic emissions in the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. The data for road transport emissions is published annually and has been reported since 1990 onwards. The Government does not estimate emissions from transport refrigeration unit auxiliary engines as the available data are limited.

Defra commissioned research and is working with industry and sector experts to improve the evidence base on emissions from non-road mobile machinery emissions, including transport refrigeration units. As set out in the Clean Air Strategy, the Government is considering the options to reduce emissions from non-road mobile machinery, and this research will help ensure that we have a robust and accurate evidence base to consider policy options from.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[180399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with fleet delivery companies on minimising the environmental impact of fleet delivery vehicles.

Rebecca Pow:

This Government is committed to tackling climate change, delivering our net zero commitment and improving our air quality across the UK.

Over the past year we have engaged with a broad range of stakeholders, including delivery companies, via multiple channels to seek views and evidence in support of the development of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP). The TDP will be published this Spring and will take a holistic and cross-modal approach to decarbonising the entire transport system, setting out a credible and ambitious pathway to cut emissions. One of the strategic priorities in the Plan will be to examine how we get our goods and the decarbonisation of “last mile” deliveries.

■ Equine Herpes Virus: Disease Control**Damian Hinds:**[\[180467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the measures in place to protect against Equine Herpes Virus-1 outbreaks in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is working closely with the equine sector to ensure owners are aware of the risks and are taking the necessary precautions to keep their animals safe. Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) is not a notifiable disease and isolation of sick animals is the best protection against infection. There is no public health risk. Horse owners are advised to contact their private vet if they observe any respiratory illness, abortion or neurological signs in horses or ponies in their care or would like to discuss options for vaccination against the disease.

All horses imported into the UK are required to be certified as being fit to travel and not to have originated from premises where disease is known to be present. Any horses imported into the UK should be placed in isolation for at least ten days before allowing them to mix with other equines.

Comprehensive industry advice and guidance on biosecurity and vaccination is available online and the Animal and Plant Health Agency international trade team is, on behalf of Defra, writing to anyone wishing to import any equine from Europe to remind them of this guidance and strongly recommend that it is followed.

Current biosecurity protocols and guidance are known to be effective at controlling the spread of EHV-1 and have been successful in preventing its spread into the UK during the current outbreak. We continue to work with and support the industry in containing the threat to the UK horse population.

■ Food: Production**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[180472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the amount of food that is produced on a non-commercial basis on (a) allotments and (b) private land.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra estimates the proportion of fresh fruit and vegetables entering the household which come from free sources, mainly gardens and allotments. In 2018/19 this was 3 percent.

In the same period the percentage of eggs entering the household which were free or home produced was 3.8 percent.

Food: Sales**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[180395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent environmental impact assessment his Department has undertaken on increases in portion sizes of food sold by supermarkets.

Rebecca Pow:

The Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) evidence suggests that having a wider range of pack-sizes / formats at the right price could be one of the key solutions to reduce food waste and the associated negative impacts on the environment. They estimate that helping customers buy the right pack size for their needs could prevent more than 200,000 tonnes/year of food waste across key packaged perishable categories annually.

We work closely with WRAP and their work with retailers and manufacturers to push for pack sizes that meet the needs of single-person households, or homes in which householders eat as individuals, rather than together, and that these are available at the right price point; that there is clear communication on portion or servings size. We also support WRAP work in testing and rolling out product innovations such as split-packs or resealable packaging where it increases product life. A regular retail survey ensures we can monitor progress and share best practice across the sector.

The Government's reduction and reformulation programme includes reducing portion size as one of three mechanisms for action to be used by all sectors of the food industry to reduce intakes of calories, sugar and salt.

Greyhounds: Animal Welfare**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[180430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the welfare of greyhounds of their export to Pakistan once they have been retired from racing.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[180431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with the Greyhound Board of Great Britain on protecting the welfare of greyhounds that are being exported to Pakistan once they have been retired from racing.

Andrew Rosindell:

[180433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the welfare of greyhounds that have finished their racing career.

Victoria Prentis:

In January 2019 the Government announced an increased funding commitment from bookmakers to support the Greyhound Board of Great Britain's (GBGB) efforts to improve welfare. In 2019/20 the British Greyhound Racing Fund collected a total of £8.87m from bookmakers, up from £6.95m in the previous 12 months. The Government continues to encourage any remaining bookmakers that have not signed up to the voluntary arrangements to do so and welcomes the 22 March 2021 announcement by the Betting and Gaming Council that four more bookmakers have agreed to begin contributing to Fund. Working with the GBGB, each year the Fund contributes half its revenue to the welfare of racing greyhounds.

GBGB has committed to ensure that, wherever possible, every greyhound leaving GBGB racing should be rehomed. They have also introduced the Greyhound Retirement Scheme. The scheme attaches a £400 bond to each greyhound at the point of registration, paid for jointly by the owner and GBGB, in order to pay for rehoming costs at the end of a dog's racing life.

Once a greyhound's racing career is over, these dogs may be exported to Pakistan if the appropriate animal health and welfare certification requirements are met. We consider that completion of this process is sufficiently rigorous and costly to prevent the wide scale exportation of dogs from the UK. Since the beginning of 2019 we have only one record of an application for a certificate to export a greyhound to Pakistan. However, we are unable to account for any movements to Pakistan that may have transited through a third country.

If we find evidence that there is a widespread problem, we can then consider what further steps may be necessary. GBGB is currently investigating whether any licensed GBGB member has knowingly supplied any greyhound directly to Pakistan.

■ Livestock: Exports

Virginia Crosbie:

[182120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timescale is for (a) publishing the results of the consultation on the export ban of live animals for slaughter and fattening and (b) implementing the recommendations arising from that consultation.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Caerphilly on 15 April 2021, [PQ UIN 178842](#).

■ National Parks

Sir Geoffrey Cox:

[\[180450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ensure that the implementation of the principle of local governance of national parks remains effective; and what assessment he has made of the compatibility of that principle and the introduction of a National Landscape Service.

Rebecca Pow:

The Landscapes Review recommended that the current system of local governance for National Parks should be reformed, and set out a number of specific proposals for how it should be changed to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society. It also recommended that a new National Landscapes Service is needed to ensure that our protected landscapes can achieve more than the sum of their parts for people and for nature.

The government will work with our partner organisations to consider carefully the importance of effective local governance as we develop our response to the review, including any changes to local and national governance structures. We will publish our response in due course.

■ Neonicotinoids

Ruth Jones:

[\[180607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the environmental effect of the emergency authorisation of a neonicotinoid product as a seed treatment on sugar beet.

Victoria Prentis:

Emergency authorisation applications for pesticides are considered based on a scientific assessment by the Health and Safety Executive and the independent UK Expert Committee on Pesticides following established procedures. The emergency authorisation decision considers the need for authorisation, the risks to human and animal health and the environment from use of the product. Applicants must also demonstrate that use will be limited and controlled and that there are special circumstances, which may include work that is being undertaken to find alternative solutions to use of the requested product.

In the case of the emergency authorisation this year for Cruiser SB (containing thiamethoxam) on sugar beet, strict conditions were attached to ensure that potential risks to pollinators and the environment would be minimised. One of these was to ensure that the product would only be used if the pest pressure was predicted to pass a certain threshold. Ultimately, the threshold for usage was not met and so the neonicotinoid will not be used on sugar beet crops planted in 2021.

The UK is a world leader in developing greener farming practices and upholds the highest standards of environmental and health protection. The Government is developing the revised National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides,

which sets out the ambition to further minimise the risks and impacts of pesticides on human health and the environment. We are equally committed to protecting pollinators, and our National Pollinator Strategy sets out how the Government, conservation groups, farmers, beekeepers and researchers can work together to improve the status of pollinating insect species in England.

■ Peat Bogs: Fires

Ruth Jones:

[\[180608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications of the continued burning of peat on the UK's effectiveness as host of COP26.

Rebecca Pow:

We have always been clear of the need to phase out rotational burning of protected blanket bog to conserve these vulnerable habitats. There is an established scientific consensus that burning of vegetation on such sites is damaging and that is why we are taking action to prevent further damage by bringing forward legislation that will limit burning of vegetation on protected deep peat.

This legislation represents a crucial step in meeting the Government's nature and climate change mitigation and adaptation targets, including the legally binding commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

We will be setting out further measures to restore, protect and manage England's peatlands this year as part of a package of measures to protect England's landscapes and nature-based solutions.

■ Peat: Sales

Esther McVey:

[\[180484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent progress his Department has made on banning the sale of peat for use in domestic gardens.

Esther McVey:

[\[180485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the sale of peat for use in domestic gardens.

Rebecca Pow:

We are committed to phasing out the use of peat in horticulture in England. The biggest user of peat is the amateur sector, and this is an important part of our policy focus. We signalled to the industry that if we have not seen sufficient movement to peat alternatives by 2020, then we would look at further measures that could be taken. We are working towards publishing a formal consultation this year on further measures to end the use of horticultural peat.

■ Potatoes: Storage

James Wild:

[\[180626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of licensing DMN for use in potato storage.

Victoria Prentis:

Before a pesticide can be used, its active substance must be approved and the pesticide itself must be authorised. Decisions on approval and authorisation are based on an assessment of the risks posed to people and to the environment. Such decisions are devolved and so are taken by the relevant government or by the Health and Safety Executive on its behalf.

The active substance 1,4-dimethylnaphthalene (1,4-DMN) is approved but at present there is no authorised product. The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have granted an emergency authorisation allowing the limited and controlled use until 31 May 2021 of a 1,4-DMN product to prevent sprouting of harvested potatoes. This emergency authorisation is granted in recognition of the need for sprout suppression and the lack, in certain circumstances, of alternative means of control.

■ Rainforests: Environment Protection

Claire Hanna:

[\[180634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the Northern Ireland Protocol of the proposals in Schedule 16 of the Environment Bill on the use of forest risk commodities in commercial activity.

Rebecca Pow:

We are introducing world-leading due diligence legislation through the Environment Bill to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. These amendments achieve that by regulating businesses, which is a reserved policy area in Scotland and Wales and transferred in Northern Ireland. We are working closely with Devolved Administrations including Northern Ireland colleagues to allow these measures to extend across the UK.

The Northern Ireland Protocol sets out arrangements for Northern Ireland in light of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. It exists to ensure that the progress made in the 22 years since the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement is secured into the future. The protocol applies specified provisions of European Union law in Northern Ireland. It also puts in terms to maintain unfettered access to the rest of the UK market for Northern Ireland businesses and to ensure that trade flows as smoothly as possible. The due diligence provisions in the Environment Bill will not have an impact on the principles or obligations set out in the Protocol, and we will continue to monitor its implementation to ensure this continues to be the case.

■ Sewage: Pollution**Dr Matthew Offord:****[180470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Combined Sewage Overflow discharges occurred in the last 12 months.

Rebecca Pow:

The 2020 storm overflow data submitted by water companies in England is published by the Environment Agency on gov.uk and can be found following the link below:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/21e15f12-0df8-4bfc-b763-45226c16a8ac>

In 2020 there were 12,092 storm overflows with monitoring data, reporting a total spills count for the year of 403,171.

Dr Matthew Offord:**[180471]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the combined length of time was that Combined Sewage Overflows discharged effluent in the last 12 months.

Rebecca Pow:

The 2020 storm overflow data submitted by water companies in England is published by the Environment Agency on gov.uk and can be found following the link below:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/21e15f12-0df8-4bfc-b763-45226c16a8ac>

In 2020 there were 12,092 storm overflows with monitoring data reporting a combined length of time of operation for the year of 3,101,150 hours.

■ Supermarkets: Litter**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[180397]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of supermarkets on supporting community organisations to reduce littering in their local communities.

Rebecca Pow:

Although the Secretary of State is in regular communication with supermarket retailers, Defra has had no specific conversations with representatives of supermarkets on supporting community organisations to reduce littering.

The Government continues to use its influence to support national clear-up days, which help to empower and engage communities in tackling litter and to change attitudes towards littering. We have also recently updated the Countryside Code, reminding people to respect the outdoors and take their litter home with them.

I recently spoke at the launch of the 2021 Great British Spring Clean, urging as many people and businesses as possible to participate, and have committed to volunteer during the event. By taking part, we can all set the tone for the summer ahead, by showing that litter is not acceptable, and that people care deeply about protecting their local environment.

Many retailers choose to support these events, and local stores often encourage staff and customers to take part. We understand that in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic some retailers are, quite reasonably, focusing much of their charitable efforts on the food redistribution and supply sector at present.

■ Waste Disposal: Parks

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[180396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that there is a sufficient volume of refuse space for use in public parks.

Rebecca Pow:

Principal Litter Authorities such as local councils or crown authorities are responsible for keeping their relevant land clear of litter and refuse. This includes public parks, national parks and royal parks. It is up to the respective authorities to decide how best to meet this statutory duty.

Litter authorities may choose to install bins in public places and have a duty to make arrangements for the regular emptying and cleansing of any litter bins that they provide or maintain.

On behalf of Defra and MHCLG, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have recently published guidance for local authorities and Business Improvement Districts in England on the provision of litter bins. *The Right Bin in the Right Place* guidance is available at <https://wrap.org.uk/content/bininfrastructure-right-bin-right-place>

In support of this guidance, the Litter Bininfrastructure Grant scheme provided local authorities in England with the opportunity to apply for capital grants of £10,000-£25,000 to support the purchase of new litter bins. The scheme, which is being managed by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and funded by Defra, was open from 17th December 2020 until 10th March 2021. In total 77 applications were received, with £983,000 being awarded to local authorities across 44 grants.

We also continue to campaign to raise awareness of littering issues. Last summer, in response to Covid-19, Defra developed a 'Respect the Outdoors' campaign to encourage people to follow the Countryside Code and to highlight the impacts of littering. This was promoted both online and in locations across the country near to urban parks, beaches and national parks. We also supported, and provided funding for, Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks campaign, which encouraged people to treat our parks with respect.

Preliminary evaluation of these campaigns indicated that they had a positive influence on the target audience's intended disposal of PPE litter, with anecdotal reports from local authorities that the intervention resulted in a markedly beneficial outcome.

■ Wildlife: Bridges

Daisy Cooper:

[\[178569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken in response to Natural England's report, *Green bridges: safer travel for wildlife*, published July 2015; and if he will make it his policy to identify appropriate sites for green bridges in England.

Rebecca Pow:

The Natural England report reviewed 53 case studies and found evidence that, in the majority of cases, green bridges were used by wildlife, although further studies were needed. Guidance on the design of green bridges, based on this review, was published in December 2015 by the Landscape Institute.

Green bridges are increasingly being used as part of transport infrastructure projects to help connect habitats. For example, a green bridge was built as part of the A556 Knutsford to Bowdon improvement scheme, and the A303 Stonehenge and Lower Thames Crossing schemes both include plans for several green bridges.

HS2 has been designed with a view to avoiding or reducing impacts on habitats and species, and to create a green corridor for wildlife along its length. Between London and the West Midlands, 16 green bridges are currently planned, as well as underpasses to provide safe crossing points for bats and other wildlife.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Bangladesh: Refugees

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[180461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of fires in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar on the humanitarian situation of refugees.

Nigel Adams:

The UK government is very concerned by the impact on Rohingya refugees of the large fire that took place on 22 March in the Kutapalong refugee camp.

A UN-led joint needs assessment found that 48,300 people were directly affected, with over 10,000 households left without shelter. At least 11 refugees are thought to have died, with over 500 injured. The fire damaged distribution, nutrition and learning centres, water and sanitation infrastructure, and medical facilities. UK Aid provided food, water, sanitation, shelter, and support for medical and camp management teams who coordinated the response. UK Aid has brought in an additional 10,000 tarpaulins for the rehabilitation of shelters.

■ Brazil: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones:

[\[180596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Brazil.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary has congratulated Foreign Minister França on his appointment. The UK and Brazil have a close dialogue on bilateral and global issues, including the environment, science, and trade. We expect to continue deepening this cooperation regardless of the recent political changes.

■ Civil Disorder: Northern Ireland

Ruth Jones:

[\[180595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the public disorder in Northern Ireland.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary and US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken speak regularly on a broad range of issues, including Northern Ireland. Our Embassy in Washington regularly engages with the US Administration and Congress on Northern Ireland. The Government wants to work with all our partners in the United States, the European Union and Ireland to ensure that Northern Ireland can continue to prosper.

■ Colombia: Trade Unions

Ruth Jones:

[\[180597\]](#)

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

Wendy Morton:

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues with their Colombian counterparts. Most recently, the UK's Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, raised our concerns around killings of human rights defenders, media freedom, and sexual violence, on a virtual visit to Colombia in February.

We continue to support efforts to improve the security and protection of human rights defenders, including through the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund.

■ Commonwealth

Ruth Jones:

[\[180602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign Secretary last met the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the virtual Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM), which he chaired on 14 October 2020. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, regularly engages with the Secretary-General in Commonwealth meetings, including the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group Meeting CMAG, which last met on 24 March 2021. The UK Commonwealth Envoy regularly takes part in meetings with the Secretary-General, in his capacity as a Governor of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

■ Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**Ruth Jones:**[\[180603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2021.

Nigel Adams:

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon (Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth), the UK Commonwealth Envoy and the British High Commissioner to Rwanda are in regular touch with the Government of Rwanda (GoR) and the Commonwealth Secretariat on preparations for the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Thanks to the GoR, in March 2021, our High Commission in Kigali participated in an Advance Visit Programme, alongside other member states. As outgoing Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, we have been working closely with the GoR and the Commonwealth Secretariat to share all aspects of our experience of hosting the CHOGM in 2018.

Ruth Jones:[\[180605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on the UK agenda for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government summit.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is actively participating in formal preparations for the upcoming 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). We are working closely with Government of Rwanda (who will host the CHOGM and take over from us the role of Commonwealth Chair-in-Office), the other member states and the Commonwealth Secretariat. We are looking to secure outcomes which build on the commitments and aspirations of the London CHOGM in 2018, and which respond to new shared challenges. Priorities include, for example, climate change, sustainability, education and health. We hope that Commonwealth leaders will take the opportunity to boost momentum towards COP26. On education, we are encouraging Leaders' reaffirmation of their commitment to ensure that all girls and boys get 12 years of quality education.

■ Commonwealth: Young People

Stuart Anderson:

[\[180613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to strengthen connections to the Commonwealth among young people.

Nigel Adams:

As Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, we have championed the voice of its young people and supported enhanced participation in decision-making, including through national youth networks. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2018, the UK announced a new £5m contribution to the Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships endowment fund, supporting the creation by 2025 of 150 new scholarships which enable Commonwealth students to study in one another's countries.

The FCDO continues to fund the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission, in 2020/2021 contributing over £25m to support over 700 new awards for individuals from Commonwealth countries to study at UK universities. In addition, the UK's Chevening scholarship supported 450 scholars from the Commonwealth to study for a Master's degree at UK universities. The FCDO's £1,030,661 annual contribution to the Commonwealth Youth Programme supports a range of youth-centric pan-Commonwealth initiatives, showcasing and celebrating the achievements of young people in driving democracy and development. It also provides technical assistance for national and regional youth policies and programmes. The Government of Rwanda have identified Youth as one of its five policy pillars for the upcoming Kigali CHOGM. The UK is working to encourage Leaders to reaffirm their commitment to ensuring that all girls and boys get 12 years of quality education.

■ Darfur: Armed Conflict

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[180970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) accuracy of claims made on 8 April 2021 by the Governor of West Darfur, Mohamed Abdullah al-Doma, that foreign militias are involved in violence in Darfur and (b) origins of those militias.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned by the violence in Geneina, West Darfur. This is part of a worrying trend of intercommunal violence across Darfur, which we are monitoring. We are also concerned by reports of the involvement of foreign militias but are not able to verify these claims as the area remains highly insecure. We have called for an end to the violence and for immediate humanitarian access. We have also urged the Government of Sudan to: deliver their commitment to assume full responsibility for the Protection of Civilians; implement swiftly their National Plan for Civilian Protection; and to implement the Juba Peace Agreement, particularly provisions relating to security arrangements.

We welcome the Government of Sudan's open engagement on the issue of Geneina intercommunal violence and willingness to acknowledge the security challenge they face. This includes at a UK-requested briefing with the UN Security Council on 14 April, where Sudan outlined their commitment to dispatch security forces to the area, to expedite humanitarian assistance, and acknowledged the need to work with the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (UNITAMS) to address Protection of Civilian issues.

■ **Darfur: Safety and Security**

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[180971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the UNAMID drawdown on safety and security in Darfur.

James Duddridge:

The UN Security Council ended the mandate of UNAMID at the insistence of the Government of Sudan, who asserted that they would assume full responsibility for Protection of Civilians. Recent violence has however exposed weaknesses that urgently need to be addressed. We welcome the Government of Sudan's open engagement on the issue of Geneina intercommunal violence and willingness to acknowledge the security challenges they face. This includes at a UK-requested briefing with the UN Security Council on 14 April, where the Sudanese outlined their commitment to dispatch security forces to the area, to expedite humanitarian assistance, and acknowledged the need to work with the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan to address Protection of Civilian issues.

During a visit to Sudan in April, the UK Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs travelled to Darfur and heard about some of the security challenges first hand; he drew on this in meetings with the Government of Sudan to urge them to prioritise humanitarian access and implement the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) as part of providing Protection of Civilians in Darfur.

■ **Denmark: Syria**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[182100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Danish counterparts on the issue of stripping 189 Syrian refugees of residency permits in Denmark.

Wendy Morton:

When we have concerns about humanitarian issues and conditions in a country, we raise these directly with the government concerned. Denmark is party to both the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the 1951 Refugee Convention and we are confident that Denmark has a robust legal rationale to demonstrate this approach and is in compliance with its obligations under both Conventions.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[\[180500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with UNICEF on its VaccinAid campaign; and what steps he is taking to ensure that countries that require vaccines receive them.

Wendy Morton:

Officials in the FCDO have had discussions with UNICEF on its VaccinAid campaign, Give the World A Shot. FCDO has shared information on the campaign through our social media channels. FCDO officials receive regular requests from the UK public asking to donate in support of COVAX vaccinations, and this initiative will allow the generous UK public to support efforts to ensure that vaccines are reaching across the world.

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, and has committed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), which is the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines, of which the UK is one of the largest bilateral donors. Our commitment helped encourage other donors to commit \$1 billion by the end of 2020. Our funding will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 for up to 92 developing countries. Over 100 countries and territories have received COVAX deliveries. The Prime Minister has also said that the UK will share the majority of future vaccine doses surplus to domestic needs with COVAX.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services

Ruth Jones:

[\[180609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is providing to strengthen health systems in low income countries to respond to the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

The Integrated Review, published on 16 March 2021, sets out UK priorities for global health, including support to strengthen health systems around the world. Strong, resilient, and accessible health systems are essential to our aims of ending the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening global health security, and ending preventable deaths.

COVID-19 has severely disrupted health systems. The UK has committed up to £1.3 billion towards the international response to the pandemic, supporting the direct response to COVID-19, and tackling the broader health, humanitarian, and socio-economic impacts. UK funding to the Global Fund, Gavi, and the Global Financing Facility has helped keep essential health services running during the pandemic, as have the UK's bilateral health programme. Additionally, our core voluntary funding to World Health Organisation (WHO) of £34 million over the next four years will help to strengthen health systems in vulnerable countries.

■ Environment Protection

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[179314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his policy is on the recognition by the UN of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

James Duddridge:

The UK recognises the serious and unequivocal threat that climate change poses to our planet, and that it can undermine the enjoyment of human rights. However, any recognition of a new legal right must give due regard to the structure of international human rights law so as not to undermine the notion and value of human rights as a whole.

■ G7: Fossil Fuels

Alexander Stafford:

[\[179715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that other G7 countries are ending support for fossil fuel projects abroad.

James Duddridge:

Through our G7 Presidency we are pursuing credible, tangible and lasting multilateral climate action, further enabling an ambitious and comprehensive negotiated outcome at COP26. We are committed to supporting the transition to a low carbon economy through increased investment and cooperation in green technologies and we continue to strive for consensus on these issues ahead of the G7 Climate & Environment Ministerial (20-21 May) and the G7 Leaders' Summit (11-13 June). This includes a dedicated review of support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas by G7 members, with a focus on the most polluting fossil fuels.

■ International Development Association: Finance

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[182081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179341, whether the budget for the World Bank's International Development Association for 2021-22 is £25,666,666 as stated on devtracker.

James Duddridge:

Donor contributions to the current International Development Association (IDA) replenishment are expected to be paid in over the period from July 2020 to June 2023. The UK pledged £3,062 million to this replenishment and we have contributed £995 million towards this to date. The 2021/22 Spending Review confirmed that the UK would remain the largest donor to this replenishment. While FCDO's Development Tracker ('Devtracker') reflected provisional plans for a further payment of around £26 million, we cannot yet confirm our final specific funding allocations for

2021-22. Devtracker will be updated, as needed, once this allocation has been agreed.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power

Chris Evans:

[\[181254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly:

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is the best, and currently only, way to monitor and constrain Iran's nuclear programme. But Iran's continued systematic non-compliance with its JCPOA commitments is undermining the non-proliferation benefits of the deal and jeopardising our efforts to preserve it. In his call with President Rouhani on 10 March, the Prime Minister stressed that while the UK remains committed to making the JCPOA a success, Iran must stop all nuclear activity that breaches the terms of the deal and come back into compliance.

We are particularly concerned by Iran's announcement on 16 April that it has started uranium enrichment up to 60% using advanced centrifuges. As the E3 said in a statement on 14 April, the production of highly enriched uranium constitutes an important step in the production of a nuclear weapon. Iran has no credible civilian need for enrichment at this level.

We continue to work with the parties to the JCPOA and the new US Administration to find a diplomatic way forward that realises the benefits of the deal, and call upon Iran not to take any further steps which violate its JCPOA commitments and make a return to mutual compliance harder to achieve.

■ Mozambique: Security

Ruth Jones:

[\[180604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the security situation in northern Mozambique.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in northern Mozambique, and the increasing attacks by groups with links to Islamic extremism. As I [Minister Duddridge] made clear publicly on 26 and 28 March, we condemn the appalling recent attacks in Palma, Cabo Delgado and we stand with the people of Mozambique against terrorism. To date, the insurgency has claimed over 2,000 lives and displaced over 700,000 people.

We are working with the Government of Mozambique to address the root drivers of conflict and instability, including through engagement with the Government of Mozambique's regional development authority in Cabo Delgado, and by providing targeted assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding. The UK also co-chairs, with Ireland, the International Community Crisis Taskforce, which brings together the Mozambican government and the

international community in high-level discussion about humanitarian and other crises, including the ongoing crisis in Cabo Delgado. UK Aid has provided £20m of humanitarian and development support to people in northeast Mozambique, ensuring they have access to food, shelter and basic healthcare.

■ Non-governmental Organisations: Overseas Aid

Chris Law:

[\[180532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of reductions in Official Development Assistance spending in 2021 on civil society organisations.

Nigel Adams:

We are currently working through the implications of the cuts to the ODA budget for individual programmes. Once decisions have been made we will work closely with partners, including civil society organisations, to manage the implications for them and their work, as well as monitoring the impact on the sector as a whole.

■ Overseas Aid

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[178980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what contributions the Government made to the (a) core, and (b) non-core funding of (i) the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), (ii) the World Health Organization (WHO), (iii) the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), (iv) the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), (v) the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), (vi) Women and Children First UK, (vii) the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and (viii) the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in (A) 2018, (B) 2019 and (C) 2020.

Wendy Morton:

In recent years the UK has been a proud contributor to UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, IPPF (through the Women's Integrated Sexual Health Programme and the UK Aid Connect programme), Women and Children First UK, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and UN Women. Information on the UK's financial contributions can be found via the links provided.

- UNFPA -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920062/Table-A8.ods
- WHO -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920062/Table-A8.ods
- UNICEF -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920062/Table-A8.ods

- UNAIDS - <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204036>
- IPPF - <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-205241/transactions>
<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-CHC-229476-ACCESS/transactions>
- Women and Children First UK - <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204266/transactions>
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920062/Table-A8.ods
- UN Women -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920062/Table-A8.ods

Chris Law:

[180530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Statistics on International Development: Provisional UK Aid Spend 2020 published by his Department on 8 April 2021, whether UK aid programmes been (a) reduced and (b) cancelled as a result of the £712m reduction in Official Development Assistance spending in 2020.

Nigel Adams:

The decrease in 2020 ODA spend reflects the decrease in the size of the economy in 2020, therefore a decrease in the value of the 0.7 per cent commitment for 2020, as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. UK aid spend on ODA programmes were reduced or cancelled in line with this decrease.

Chris Law:

[180531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Statistics on International Development: Provisional UK Aid Spend 2020, published by his Department on 8 April 2021, what plans he has to publish details of the effect of the £712m reduction in Official Development Assistance spending between 2019 and 2020 on UK aid programmes.

Nigel Adams:

Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2020, published in the autumn, will contain detailed breakdowns of the UK's ODA spend for 2020 including bilateral UK ODA by recipient country and sector.

Chris Law:

[180533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of rapid reductions in Official Development Assistance spending in 2021 on existing UK aid programmes.

Nigel Adams:

The Covid pandemic's economic impact has forced the government to take the difficult decision to temporarily reduce ODA to 0.5% of GNI. Despite this reduction, we will remain a world-leading ODA donor, spending around £10 billion on ODA in

2021-22. The Foreign Secretary has set out a strategic approach to ensure maximum impact for our aid spend for 2021-22, laying a Written Ministerial Statement for Parliament in January, summarising overall departmental cross-government allocations of ODA.

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[181248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK continues to uphold its Grand Bargain commitments on localisation.

James Cleverly:

We are committed to delivering an efficient and effective humanitarian system and the implementation of World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain commitments, including recognising national and local organisations and communities as first responders to crises. We have been one of the largest donors to the UN Country-Based Pooled Funds, who channel a substantial proportion of their funding to local and national actors - 25% in 2019 - and support the Start Network, which facilitates action among local and national NGOs, as well as the Red Cross Movement. We continue innovative approaches to promote greater localisation, notably an £18 million fund launched in 2020 for UK NGOs responding to COVID-19 designed to encourage improved partnerships with local and national actors. The UK is at the forefront of discussions to develop a successor arrangement to the Grand Bargain beginning later this year, working with the UN, Red Cross and civil society.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[182080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what targets he has to ensure that all UK aid spending Departments achieve (a) good or (b) very good at the next assessment by the the Aid Transparency Index.

Nigel Adams:

The 2015 UK Aid Strategy set out the expectation that aid-spending UK government departments would achieve good or very good in the Aid Transparency Index.

Following on from the 2015 UK Aid Strategy, an International Development Strategy will be published later in 2021 in line with the ODA strategic framework which the Foreign Secretary announced on 26 November. The FCDO continues to be committed to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard, with the next Aid Transparency Index due to be published in June 2022. The indicators for the Aid Transparency Index are set by Publish What You Fund, and all UK aid spending Departments use the 'good' or 'very good' markers. My officials have created a community of practice for all UK aid spending Departments to share and solve challenges with their data transparency whilst working towards achieving the standard.

■ Overseas Aid: Religion

Jim Shannon:

[\[180496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposed reductions in Official Development Assistance on support for marginalised religious or belief communities affected by the covid-19 pandemic.

Nigel Adams:

We are continuing to assess the impact of Covid-19 on members of all minority religious and belief communities. At a country level, Ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern, and discuss practices and laws that discriminate on the basis of religion or belief. At a multilateral level, we work within the UN, International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance ('Alliance') and other international organisations to promote and protect freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all where it is threatened.

The Minister of State responsible for human rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, virtually attended the Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief in Warsaw in November 2020 and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to promoting FoRB, particularly during the pandemic. In August 2020, we issued a joint statement with the Alliance calling for states to ensure that any restrictions to the right to freedom of religion or belief are necessary, proportionate and time-limited to protect public health.

FCDO Ministers are currently working with officials to finalise ODA budget allocations for 2021/22. Final decisions have not yet been made, including on individual programmes.

■ Overseas Aid: UN Climate Conference 2021

Chris Law:

[\[180534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reductions in the Official Development Assistance budget on the UK's COP26 ambitions.

Chris Law:

[\[180539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of reductions in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget on the UK's COP26 ambitions.

Chris Law:

[\[180540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of reductions in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget on the UK's ability to fulfil its Paris Agreement requirement that all International Climate Finance be additional to existing ODA.

Chris Law:

[\[180543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget on the UK's COP26 ambitions.

James Duddridge:

As set out in the Integrated Review, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is the number one international priority for the UK in 2021 and beyond. As host of COP26, securing greater global ambition is a priority for this Government and finance is key. We are fulfilling our own pledge to provide £5.8 billion in international climate finance (ICF) to developing countries, and are committed to doubling our ICF to £11.6 billion over the next five years. Since 2011 UK ICF has helped over 66 million people cope with the effects of climate change, and installed 2000 megawatts of clean energy.

■ **Palestinians: Textbooks**

Craig Tracey:

[\[180561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress has been made on the international review into the content of Palestinian Authority school textbooks.

James Cleverly:

We understand the review is in the final stages and the final report is due to be completed shortly. We continue to engage with the EU at a senior level and push for timely publication. We will review the findings carefully before deciding on any next steps.

■ **Religious Freedom: Hate Crime**

Jim Shannon:

[\[180495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help tackle online hate speech towards minority religious and belief communities that have been blamed for spreading covid-19 in many countries.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO are continuing to assess the impact of Covid-19 on members of all minority religious and belief communities. We are particularly concerned by the secondary effects of the pandemic including incidents of hate speech and the rise in conspiracy theories that certain faiths or beliefs are to blame for the pandemic. We will continue to refute these divisive and harmful claims and raised our concerns both during the 46th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2021 and the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly in November 2020.

■ Republic of Ireland

Ruth Jones:

[\[180600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Irish counterpart; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary met Foreign Minister Simon Coveney on Thursday 15 April 2021. They discussed collaboration on foreign policy priorities following their previous call in February and Northern Ireland.

■ Rwanda: Education

Sarah Olney:

[\[182079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has for continuing engagement on the Platform for Girls' Education when the role of Commonwealth Chair-in-Office is handed over to Rwanda in June 2021.

Wendy Morton:

Girls' education continues to be a top priority for the UK, and at CHOGM 2021 we will encourage Commonwealth member states to continue their commitment to providing the opportunity for 12 years of quality education and learning for all girls and boys by 2030. We will use our G7 Presidency and CHOGM this year to rally the international community in stepping up support for girls' education, and will co-host the Global Education Summit: Financing GPE 2021-2025, with Kenya.

The Foreign Secretary has been proud to co-chair the Platform for Girls' Education with Kenyan Minister Amina Mohamed, while the UK has been Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth. The Platform has issued policy papers that have been well-received by the international community, focusing on girls' education in the Commonwealth, gender-responsive education sector plans, and the importance of political leadership in driving change for girls' education. The papers included recommendations for action by policymakers and governments, which the Platform Members have promoted.

■ Saudi Arabia: Uranium

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[178830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Saudi Arabian counterpart on reports that that country is establishing a uranium enrichment programme.

James Cleverly:

The Department has not engaged with the Saudi authorities on this matter.

■ Southern African Development Community

Ruth Jones:

[\[180601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the leadership of the Southern African Development Community.

James Duddridge:

The UK regularly engages with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on a range of political, economic and climate-related issues. The British High Commissioner to Gaborone, in her role as the UK's Special Representative to SADC, most recently engaged with the SADC Executive Secretary in February 2021 to update her on the UK's autonomous sanctions regime. The British High Commissioner to Maputo met with President Nyusi of Mozambique, the current Chair of SADC, on 1 April 2021 to offer our continued cooperation on peace and security in the Southern Africa region, in light of the recent attacks in Palma, northeast Mozambique.

■ St Vincent and the Grenadines: Humanitarian Situation

Ruth Jones:

[\[180594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Nigel Adams:

We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruption. An estimated 16-20,000 people are directly affected, with just over 3,700 currently in shelters. Infrastructure and agriculture have also been badly hit and ash fall is significant and causing problems with the movement of people, as well as impacting electricity and water supplies.

To address the immediate needs over the weekend we pledged an initial £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to help address the immediate humanitarian impact of the volcano eruption. This will be used for emergency supplies and other requirements. Urgently needed technical experts will support relief efforts on the ground, support emergency telecommunications, and restore critical lifeline facilities. We have provided advice from the UK Government Office of Science (GO Science) and the British Geological Survey on how to deal with the significant ash fall (including on its impact on livestock). Finally the UK is also a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, spoke to the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and his High Commissioner to the UK on 14 April. They discussed initial and ongoing UK support for the recovery following the volcanic eruption.

We will continue to work with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and other appropriate agencies to provide further support.

■ **St Vincent and the Grenadines: Volcanoes**

Andrew Rosindell:

[180438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with its counterpart in St. Vincent on UK support following the eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano.

Nigel Adams:

We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruption. My colleague, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, spoke to the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and his High Commissioner to the UK on 14 April. They discussed initial and ongoing UK support for the recovery following the volcanic eruption. Our Resident British Commissioner in St Vincent and the Grenadines has also been in contact with Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves and other officials.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [182039]

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 that following the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano on the islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, only people who have been vaccinated against covid-19 are able to access evacuation to neighbouring islands; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruptions.

On 8 April Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves ordered an immediate evacuation of people living in the most at-risk areas on St Vincent island. We can confirm that it is a requirement for persons who are being evacuated to another country in the region to be vaccinated. However, late on 12 April Prime Minister Gonsalves announced that his Government will no longer use cruise ships to evacuate people from the Red Zone as the numbers wanting to leave are low and people would prefer to stay on St Vincent and the Grenadines.

COVID-19 vaccinations are not required to gain access to emergency shelters or humanitarian support in-country, although Prime Minister Gonsalves is urging people to get vaccinated. There has been no impact on the provision of support from neighbouring islands (or more broadly - including by the UK), although appropriate COVID-19 measures are being used, including by those who have deployed to the island.

Mr Steve Baker:

[182040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano, what steps he is planning to take to support the islands of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Nigel Adams:

We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruptions.

On 12 April the UK pledged an initial £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to help address the humanitarian impact of the eruptions. This will provide urgent technical expertise to help coordinate the relief effort, including the provision of lifesaving emergency supplies, the restoration of telecommunications and transport links and other immediate needs including around the provision of water and electricity and in the health and agriculture sectors. We have provided technical advice from the UK Government Office of Science (GO Science) and the British Geological Survey on how to deal with the significant ash fall (including on its impact on livestock).

We currently have a volcanologist on the ground supporting the relief effort. They are working to facilitate the urgent analysis of ash samples back in the UK. This analysis will enable scientists in St Vincent to better understand how the eruptions are changing and determine seismic patterns of activity over the coming months.

The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) have allocated \$1million in response to the eruptions in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The UK is a longstanding supporter of the CERF. In 2020, the UK was one of the largest donors to the Fund, providing £66 million (\$88.6million) to support responses to humanitarian need across the globe.

Finally the UK is also a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response. We will continue to work with CDEMA and other appropriate agencies to assess the need for further UK support.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, spoke to the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and his High Commissioner to the UK on 14 April. They discussed initial and ongoing UK support for the recovery following the volcanic eruption.

■ Sub-saharan Africa: Overseas Aid

Jim Shannon:

[180497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has conducted a risk assessment on the potential effect of reductions in Official Development Assistance spending in Sub-Saharan Africa on levels of armed violence by extremist groups in that region.

James Duddridge:

As announced last year, the impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce how much we spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA). The Foreign Secretary has set out seven core priorities for the UK's aid budget, including resolving conflict. We are now working through the implications of these changes for individual country programmes. No decisions have yet been made on specific individual budget allocations.

■ Sudan: Overseas Aid**Harriett Baldwin:**[\[180972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to provide support for the economy of Sudan (a) directly and (b) via CDC Group as a result of the removal by the US of its state sponsor of terrorism designation from that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK welcomes the removal of Sudan from the United States State Sponsor of Terrorism list. This will enable Sudan to engage with international markets and investors as they reform and rebuild the economy. As a leading donor to Sudan, the UK is this year providing £125m in economic and humanitarian assistance to help build stability and improve the lives of ordinary Sudanese. On 21 January, the Foreign Secretary visited Sudan and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to support Sudan's democratic transition, including via £40m funding to the Sudan Family Support Programme, to support the Sudanese Government's programme of essential economic reforms. The Foreign Secretary also announced the UK's intent to provide a bridging loan to clear Sudan's arrears with the African Development Bank, as part of wider efforts on debt relief. Sudan falls within CDC's geographical remit for investment, but CDC does not currently have any investments in the country.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid**Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[179017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what impact assessment his Department has undertaken on the proposed reductions in official development assistance for programmes in Syria; and if he will publish that assessment.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO is in the process of a rigorous internal prioritisation process in response to the announcement on the reduction in Official Development Assistance spend. We are still working through what this means for individual programmes and no decisions have yet been made.

Zarah Sultana:[\[182099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of uprating the UK's

2021 offer of £205 million in aid to programmes in Syria to £400 million as allocated in 2020.

James Cleverly:

The seismic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid. The FCDO is working to finalise ODA budget allocations for financial year 2021/22 and until that is done will not be able to confirm individual country allocations. Final decisions have not yet been made.

At last year's Brussels Conference, the UK pledged to provide 'at least £300 million' in 2020 for Syria and the region. We actually spent over £400 million in 2020, mobilising additional support in light of the increased humanitarian needs across the region. In addition to the UK's pledge of at least £205 million in 2021, the UK will continue to use its position at the UN Security Council to push for greater access into Syria and more sustainable, long-term solutions to increase the resilience of millions living in conflict.

Zarah Sultana:

[\[182102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish (a) a list of aid programmes that the UK funds in Syria and (b) the proposed reduction in UK aid to those programmes in 2021.

James Cleverly:

The UK has spent over £3.5 billion in response to the Syria crisis since 2012, which includes support to over 30 implementing partners including UN agencies and International NGO partners.

Our aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrians, supporting refugees to remain in countries in the region, and enabling their host communities to accommodate them. Since the FCDO's response to the crisis began, our activities in the region have delivered more than 28 million monthly food rations, 14 million vaccines, 21 million medical consultations, 6 million cash grants and 10 million relief packages. The FCDO is working to finalise ODA budget allocations for financial year 2021/22 and until that is done will not be able to confirm individual country allocations. Final decisions have not yet been made.

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[182117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) potential effect of the reduction in aid to Syria in 2021 and (2) effect of recent reductions in UN authorised aid mechanisms on the delivery of UK led and funded health programmes in Syria.

James Cleverly:

The UK has announced a pledge of at least £205 million in 2021 to continue the delivery of essential humanitarian aid, including the provision of food, healthcare and water, to millions of people affected by the brutal conflict in Syria. We are working to finalise ODA budget allocations for financial year 2021/22 and until that is done will

not be able to confirm individual country allocations. Final decisions have not yet been made.

In addition to our financial support, the UK will continue to use its position at the UN Security Council to push for greater access into Syria and strongly supports the renewal of UNSCR 2533 to maintain cross-border aid. Nothing can replace the scale and scope of UN operations in northern Syria. In north-east Syria, cross-line aid delivery from Damascus has failed to fill the gaps left by the closure of the Yaroubiya crossing last year; health supplies are taking longer to reach populations in need, at a greater cost and in reduced quantities. We are appalled that Russia and China continue to place political support for the Assad regime above lifesaving support for the Syrian people; we urge the members of the UN Security Council to vote in favour of renewing the resolution in July to avoid further humanitarian disaster.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan:

[179509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of not allowing travel to attend a commemorative event under the current covid-19 regulations on different religious groups whose practices require those commemorative events to take place quickly.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: The guidance for travel exceptions from the United Kingdom can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-declaration-form-for-international-travel#permitted-reasons-for-international-travel. The guidance notes that travel for funerals falls under a reasonable excuse, but commemorative events do not.

All policies that were related to staying at home were applied equally and without prejudice - regardless of the event, religious belief or any other factor. For some time, the government has focused on ensuring the public know how to travel safely, however they decide to travel. This is important because people feel more confident travelling when they see other people complying with the same rules, for example wearing a face covering unless they are exempt.

■ Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Virginia Crosbie:

[182119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to send a representative to the meeting of states party to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 12-14 January 2022 in Vienna.

James Cleverly:

The United Kingdom will not send Observers to the First Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The Government has been clear it will not sign the TPNW. We do not believe this Treaty will bring us closer

to a world without nuclear weapons. The Government believes that the best way to achieve our collective goal of a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated using a step-by-step approach, under the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

■ Ukraine: Russia

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[180437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Ukrainian counterpart on the level of threat posed to them by the build up of Russian troops at the border.

Wendy Morton:

There has been regular senior level engagement with the Government of Ukraine and with our allies on this issue. The Foreign Secretary spoke to the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on 2 April and the Prime Minister had discussions with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine on 5 April to assure them of the UK's support and our solidarity with the government and people of Ukraine. On 12 April, the Foreign Ministers of the G7 issued a joint statement, in which they called on Russia to cease its provocations and reaffirmed our unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

Russia's build-up of military forces near the Ukrainian border and within illegally annexed Crimea indicates a troubling escalation in its ongoing campaign of aggression towards Ukraine and its militarisation of the illegally annexed peninsula.

The restraint shown by Ukraine, including efforts to deescalate and commitment to finding a diplomatic solution to this conflict, are to be commended.

■ United Nations

Ruth Jones:

[\[180599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the leadership of the United Nations.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign Secretary and UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Antonio Guterres had a bilateral meeting on 11 January 2021, during the UNSG's virtual visit to the UK. The UNSG was accompanied by the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed; Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock; Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo; and his Chief of Staff, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti. During this meeting, they identified areas of common interest for further collaboration, ranging from COP26 to COVID-19.

More recently, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed participated in the Climate and Development Ministerial meeting co-chaired by the Foreign Secretary and COP President-Designate on 31 March. They were joined by Ministers from 35 climate vulnerable and donor countries, and representatives from institutions and civil

society, to focus on implementation of the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in those countries most vulnerable to climate change.

■ **Yemen: Peace Negotiations**

Ruth Jones:

[\[180593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the prospects for a negotiated peace settlement in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

We fully support the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, and urge the parties to engage constructively with this process. An inclusive political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis.

We welcome the Saudi announcement on 22 March of a new peace initiative, which includes a nationwide ceasefire, the opening of Sana'a airport and Hodeidah port, and a return to formal peace talks between the Government and the Houthis. We urge the Houthis to engage constructively with the UN Special Envoy to end this horrific conflict.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Abortion: Childbirth**

Carla Lockhart:

[\[178573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2017 to Question 118932 on Abortion: Childbirth and the response that information on the number of live births following termination of pregnancy is not collected centrally, how data is recorded on the number of babies born live after abortion; and if his Department will publish the data on that matter that is available.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not collected centrally. The Department acknowledges that there are limitations with the data currently collected on serious incidents and complications that occur after an abortion. We are planning to examine, with partner organisations, how well these systems are working in relation to recording incidents and complications arising from abortions and whether improvements can be made.

■ **Asthma**

Liz Twist:

[\[179361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the finding in the report published in February 2021 by Demos entitled Potential Limited that people in work who suffer from uncontrolled asthma earn around £3,000 less per year than the average adult.

Liz Twist:

[\[179362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the finding in the report published in February 2021 by Demos entitled Potential Limited that uncontrolled asthma is linked to a £2 billion loss each year to the economy due to lower pay.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[150719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the figures published by the Office for National Statistics that showed the number of care home residents who died from covid-19 increased to 1705 in the week ending 22 January 2021, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of those people who had received a covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 February 2021]: This information is not currently available in the format requested.

■ **Cerebral Palsy: Children**

Greg Smith:

[\[178647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the all-party Parliamentary group on cerebral palsy's report, Early identification, intervention and pathways of care of infants and young children with cerebral palsy: The case for reform and investment, published in March 2021, if he will modify the Personal Child Health Records to include checks for signs of abnormal motor development to enable parents and health visitors to identify signs of cerebral palsy in children and enable more rapid onward referrals.

Helen Whately:

The Personal Child Health Record is constantly under review. The content and format are overseen by a multi-disciplinary group, hosted by the Royal College of Paediatric Child Health.

Greg Smith:

[\[178656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the all-party Parliamentary group on cerebral palsy's report, Early identification, intervention and pathways of care of infants and young children with cerebral palsy: The case for reform and investment, published in March 2021, if he will offer the health visitor workforce specialised training in identifying signs of early movement difficulty in infants to help identify those infants with cerebral palsy.

Jo Churchill:

An e-learning programme, 'Children's Emotional and Additional Needs' includes training for health visitors to provide support to children with long-term conditions such as cerebral palsy.

Contact Tracing: Computer Software**Nadia Whittome:**[\[179727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the UK participates in international covid-19 tracking in the same way as (a) Germany with the corona-warn-app and (b) other countries.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: We work closely with our international partners to exchange best practice and work on digital solutions including exploring ways to support citizens when international travel resumes.

Coronavirus**Layla Moran:**[\[179467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to set up more genome sequencing centres for the detection of covid-19 variants.

Jo Churchill:

There are existing plans in progress to implement genome sequencing capabilities within existing public health laboratories that will enable rapid sequencing and analysis of COVID-19 samples and to create a rapid integrated test and sequencing system within existing Departmental facilities to provide rapid test, sequencing and analysis of COVID-19 pillar 2 samples. These new operations will launch in phases between May and September 2021. In parallel, existing sequencing capacity is being expanded to maintain the highest levels of national surveillance of COVID-19.

Coronavirus: Disease Control**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[160817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has undertaken of the needs of members of the public without smartphone or internet access in the context of his future covid-19 related strategic planning as the UK completes its covid-19 vaccine rollout.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Invitations for the COVID-19 vaccine are currently being issued in a number of ways. The National Booking Service is primarily sending letters to people's registered addresses. These letters give the option of booking by the free 119 phone line. This phone line includes BSL and text relay services. Follow up phone calls and letters are made to those who have been sent an initial letter but not responded. Local vaccination services are for the most part using text messages or phone calls as the first approach. Follow up 'phone calls would also be made to those who have not

responded to initial invitations. Others can make an appointment on behalf of individuals who are not able to make it themselves.

Community Champions also work with councils to identify barriers to accessing accurate information and to provide tailored support, such as phone calls for people who are digitally excluded. We are clear that no matter how citizens choose to interact with services, they should receive the same levels of access, consistent advice and the same outcomes of care.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[181187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution, Official Report, 25 March 2021, Col 1112 in response to the hon Member for Christchurch, on what date the SIREN study from Public Health England began; how many people have participated in that study; and if he will publish the results to date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: Recruitment into the SARS-CoV-2 Immunity and REinfection EvaluationN (SIREN) study began on 18 June 2020 and finished on 31 March 2021. Over 44,000 participants have enrolled into SIREN during this period from 135 sites across the United Kingdom.

In January 2021 the SIREN team pre-printed the analysis of reinfection rates from the SIREN study up to the end of November 2020. This has since been updated to the beginning of January 2021 and published in a peer-reviewed journal which is available at the following link:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)00675-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)00675-9/fulltext)

In February 2021 the SIREN team pre-printed a second analysis which investigated vaccine coverage and effectiveness of the BNT162b2 vaccine against infection. This is scheduled to be published in a peer reviewed journal in April and is available at the following link:

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3790399

Further analyses are underway. The follow-up period is one year since enrolment for all participants, so the final study results will be available after March 2022.

■ Coronavirus: North East

Alex Sobel:

[142053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the North East and Yorkshire region's covid-19 vaccine supply via primary care is planned to be halved next week.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 27 January 2021]: There have been no specific plans to do so.

In England, the Vaccines Deployment Programme Board led by NHS England and NHS Improvement ensures that the distribution and supply of vaccine reflects each region's requirements.

■ Coronavirus: Portsmouth South

Stephen Morgan:

[\[138020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the St James' vaccine centre in the Portsmouth South constituency is planned to receive the equipment and doses it needs to become operational.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 January 2021]: As of 1 February 2021, the St James' vaccine centre has been operational.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Paul Blomfield:

[\[179075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the stock level of rapid lateral flow covid-19 tests is; and how many of those tests are needed to provide for twice weekly rapid lateral flow testing for all people in England.

Jo Churchill:

We estimate that between 35 to 45 million tests per week will be needed to provide twice weekly rapid lateral flow testing for all people in England. We have a stock level that far exceeds this to allow us to actively manage ongoing replenishment, monitor uptake and adjust incoming supply.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[136432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of potential changes in liability relating to the covid-19 vaccine process in circumstances where vaccines are not used in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Clinical negligence liabilities for individuals engaged in providing the COVID-19 vaccination programme through general practitioner practices and National Health Service trusts will be managed under the usual state indemnity schemes for clinical negligence - the Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice and the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts. In addition, pharmacy led sites will be covered by a state indemnity for clinical negligence to 31 August 2021. Volunteers provided by St John Ambulance are covered for clinical negligence by their own insurance.

Scott Mann:

[\[140201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people in receipt of pension credit will receive support for transport costs when travelling to and from their covid-19 vaccination venue.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Those in receipt of pension credit are entitled to a bus pass for free travel and 99% of people now live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre and are accessible via bus transport links.

Tulip Siddiq:**[140890]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of giving frontline NHS staff priority access to the second dose of the covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has identified that frontline health and social care workers should be in prioritised for vaccination in phase one of the programme, as these staff are at high risk of acquiring COVID-19 infection and transmitting that infection to multiple persons who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 as well as to other staff in a healthcare environment. The JCVI, based on a review of current data, concluded that the first dose of vaccine provides substantial protection within two to three weeks of vaccination from severe COVID-19 disease. Whilst the second dose is important to sustain the protection and extend its duration, most of the initial protection from clinical disease is after the first dose of the vaccine.

The National Health Service has offered vaccination to everybody in cohorts one to nine, including health and social care workers and will be delivering all second doses within 12 weeks. As of 4 April 2021, over half of NHS trust healthcare workers in the NHS Electronic Staff Record have now received the second dose of their vaccine. The data can be found at the following link:

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

Taiwo Owatemi:**[142062]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to use patient transport providers to allow clinically extremely vulnerable people without personal transport to attend regional coronavirus vaccination centres.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Clinical extremely vulnerable patients will be offered an appointment by their general practitioner (GP), which could include vaccination at home if they are housebound. They can also book online or by calling 119, where they can choose a vaccination site that meets their accessibility needs and transport requirements. They can use current non-emergency patient transport services to get to their vaccination appointment, which can be arranged via their GP. Clinical commissioning groups, integrated care systems, sustainability and transformation partnerships also list local community transport services available for travel to vaccination sites.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[142790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on investigations that have been undertaken on determining the long-term effectiveness of the covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England (PHE), through its surveillance strategy, is actively monitoring the effect of the COVID-19 vaccine on the population. This includes measuring the long-term effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines. The surveillance strategy at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-surveillance-strategy>

PHE's reports on vaccine effectiveness are available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-monitoring-of-the-effectiveness-of-covid-19-vaccination

Layla Moran:

[143078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 21 January 2021, Official Report, column 1126, what specific plans his Department has for ensuring that those in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation Priority Groups displaced by flooding receive the covid-19 vaccine; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 January 2021]: Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care System is working in partnership with the district council, who are responsible for flood mitigation plans. In instances where constituents have been displaced due to flooding, temporary registration with a local general practitioner can be arranged.

The Oxford Vaccine Delivery Group has confirmed that all eligible patients from priority groups one to nine have been contacted to be offered a vaccination.

Mark Pritchard:

[150733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on distributing surplus vaccines to Commonwealth countries.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has regular with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs to discuss the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccine distribution.

In February, the Government announced that the majority of United Kingdom surplus doses will be shared with COVAX. As of 4 March, COVAX has delivered over 10 million doses to 16 countries, 14 of which are among the 92 most vulnerable countries eligible for support via the Advance Market Commitment which the UK has provided £548 million to support.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[152444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of covid-19 vaccine uptake rates among people in priority groups 1 to 4 with (a) learning disabilities and (b) severe mental illness.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: The data is not held centrally in the format requested.

James Wild:

[\[152665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which covid-19 vaccines are available to people who cannot accept a vaccine which is derived from or tested against cell lines derived from aborted fetuses.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has confirmed that the Oxford/AstraZeneca, Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines, which have all received regulatory approval, do not contain any components of animal origin and no foetal material is present in the final vaccines.

Helen Hayes:

[\[160741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps are being taken to ensure that local (a) CCGs, (b) GPs and (c) hospitals have accurate and up to date data on patients' covid-19 vaccination status to help (i) target appointments at unvaccinated people and (ii) prevent people being contacted multiple times.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 4 March 2021]: NHS England uses a central data system collected through the national immunisation management system (NIMS). This data system draws on various local point of care immunisation data systems, including those used in hospitals, general practitioner (GP) practices and vaccination centres. At the point that someone receives their COVID-19 vaccine, this information fed into NIMS and then also on to a patient's GP record.

Eligible individuals may be contacted to come forward to book their appointment more than once - for example, they may receive a text from their local GP-led vaccination service and a national letter. Reminder letters or texts are also sent to eligible individuals if a booking has not been made via the national booking service, or a vaccination has not taken place. Additionally, a follow up telephone call may be made from the improving immunisation uptake team to support an individual to make a booking and to encourage uptake.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[174080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of (i) adults of any age and (ii) adults under 65 in contact with (A) secondary mental health and (B) learning disability and autism services who have received a first dose of a covid-19 vaccine.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[174081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number and proportion of (a) adults of any age and (b) adults under 65 that are receiving assessment or treatment in a mental health, learning disability or autism inpatient setting, including the independent sector, who have received a first dose of a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

This information is not collected centrally.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[174828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to prioritise covid-19 vaccinations for workers in the industries producing covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 13 April 2021]: In January 2021, to 2,000 people working in roles crucial to the continuity of the COVID-19 vaccine supply chain were offered vaccinations. Workers identified by the Government as being crucial to the delivery of vaccine supply included staff working for Pfizer and AstraZeneca involved in specialist, highly trained roles.

Eligible workers were identified by their employer against clear criteria and the most appropriate location for vaccination were agreed between the National Health Service, local providers and employer.

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[175970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 128169, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that (a) GPs and (b) others administering the covid-19 vaccination programme at the local level are aware that (i) people with an eating disorder may be defined as experiencing severe mental illness and (ii) carers of someone with an eating disorder may meet the definition of an adult carer specified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and therefore also require prioritisation for COVID-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has determined that those with severe mental illnesses (SMI) are within cohort 6 for the vaccine rollout, and we are encouraging General Practitioners (GPs) to take a similar approach for this group of people to that being proposed for people with learning disabilities, working in partnership with secondary care mental health services and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners to ensure appropriate outreach mechanisms are in place.

People with SMI (including people who are severely unwell with an eating disorder, who have a high or low body mass index) and their carers should receive an invitation from their GP to get their COVID-19 vaccine. This might be by letter, text message or phone, or a combination of all three. If someone is unsure if they have an SMI which falls within the official definition above, they are encouraged to contact

their GP, or mental health team. GP teams are encouraged to keep prioritising people with severe mental illness, applying a flexible approach to defining SMI.

Munira Wilson:

[180615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using a different covid-19 vaccine to Oxford-AstraZeneca for under 30 year olds who have already had their first dose of that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: There is currently no trial data available on the immune responses to mixed COVID-19 vaccine schedules. Such data are being developed by the National Immunisation Schedule Evaluation Consortium and will be considered by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) when available. The JCVI advises that all those who have received a first dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should continue to be offered a second dose of that vaccine, irrespective of age. The second dose will be important for longer lasting protection against COVID-19. The JCVI's statement on the use of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-jcvi-statement/jcvi-statement-on-use-of-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-7-april-2021>

■ **Dental Services: City of York**

Julian Sturdy:

[180479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of NHS dental provision in the City of York area.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

National Health Service dentists throughout the country have been asked to focus on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. This has been underpinned by the requirement for dental providers to deliver 60% of normal activity volumes for the first six months of 2020/21 for full payment of the NHS contractual value. As dental activity increases, a new flexible commissioning initiative will be relaunched in the City of York for dental providers this financial year, which in conjunction with a flexible commissioning toolkit introduced by NHS England and NHS Improvement, will allow available capacity to be focused on those that need it most and increase access for patients.

In circumstances where patients are unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through a NHS dental practice, they are advised to call NHS 111 who will assist in booking an appointment at one of over 100 designated urgent care centres, which continue to stay open across Yorkshire and the Humber.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy:

[\[178699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to support disabled children and their families recover from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

National Health Service guidance makes clear that community services must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or who are going through an assessment for one. These services fall under the category of 'essential services'.

As part of the COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan, the Government announced £79 million of funding to improve access to mental health services for children and young people, including disabled children. This includes additional funding for Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges. Funding is also provided for respite care.

■ Epilepsy: Death

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[178744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will support the implementation of the recommendations on epilepsy in the reports by the Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) and MBRRACE to help speed up the prevention of avoidable epilepsy deaths.

Helen Whately:

We support the Learning Disability Mortality Review's recommendation that the safety of people with epilepsy should be prioritised. It is for the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence to establish their guidelines and for the Care Quality Commission to agree how their inspections are conducted and what is considered.

In light of the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths conducted by MBRRACE, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is reviewing all available data and arranging to meet with key patient support organisations and prescribers to explore how information provided to women can be improved. The conclusions of a safety review by the Commission of Human Medicines of the risks of epilepsy medicines in pregnancy have recently been published.

■ Essential Tremor: Medical Treatments

Hilary Benn:

[\[178822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS patients have access to Transcranial Magnetic Resonance Guided Focused Ultrasound (TcMRgFUS) for the treatment of medication refractory Essential Tremor (ET) in (a) Leeds and (b) the North of England; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

A centre at Imperial Healthcare NHS Trust in London has already been identified and it is intended that this service will commence in May. A second centre in the North of England will be required and discussions are ongoing with commissioners about the possible location. It is envisaged that there will need to be a formalised provider selection process given the number of expressions of interest received.

Food: Advertising**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[180436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with stakeholders and businesses in the food and drink manufacturing industry on the timeline for the introduction of proposed restrictions on the online advertising of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has ongoing discussions with the food and drink industry and other stakeholders on the proposed introduction of restrictions on the online advertising of products high in fat, salt and sugar, including through stakeholder engagement to assist businesses in responding to the consultation. Discussions have included the timeline for the introduction of any restrictions. We also made a public commitment in our healthy weight strategy, published July 2020, that we intend to implement any further advertising restrictions on TV and online at the same time by the end of 2022.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[180439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with stakeholders and businesses in the food and drink manufacturing industry on the decision to schedule a six month implementation period following the introduction of the proposed restrictions on the promotion and placement of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has ongoing discussions with the food and drink industry and other stakeholders on restricting promotions of products that are high fat, salt or sugar by location and price in retailers. We have made clear the Government's intention to use powers in the Food Safety Act (FSA) 1990 to lay secondary legislation before Parliament by mid-2021. Once the regulations are laid in parliament, we will then allow at least a six-month implementation period before the restrictions come into force.

We recognise that these restrictions will be a novel requirement for businesses. However, we do not want to delay this policy as this will in turn result in a delayed public health benefit for the population. We will work with trade associations and local authorities to ensure businesses are supported in implementing the new requirement ahead of it coming into force in April 2022.

■ Gambling

Paul Blomfield:

[\[179072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of the potential effect on (a) the gambling industry and (b) gamblers of that industry taking a self-regulatory approach to gambling addiction.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made. The gambling industry is currently regulated by the Gambling Commission, established under the Gambling Act 2005. The role of the Gambling Commission is to permit gambling in so far as it is consistent with the licensing objectives of keeping gambling fair and crime free and protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by it.

We are working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in their comprehensive review of the Gambling Act 2005, ensuring the regulatory framework is fit for purpose and protects children and vulnerable people from gambling-related harms.

■ Gender Recognition: Health Services

Dawn Butler:

[\[182015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to (a) support trans people and (b) reduce the waiting time for trans people to access treatment provided by the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

To address waiting times and support trans people, a new service specification has been developed to deliver services in local health settings. Three new clinics, operating under this specification, have been established in London, Manchester and Cheshire and Merseyside. These clinics are subject to ongoing evaluation with the ambition of further clinics being established.

■ General Practitioners

Carla Lockhart:

[\[180654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with professional bodies representing General practitioners to encourage the resumption of face to face consultations in General practice as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

Ministers and officials regularly meet with stakeholders on issues related to general practice.

On 25 March 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement published its 2021/22 priorities and operational planning guidance which sets the priorities for the year ahead. This included, as part of restoring and increasing access to primary care services, that all practices should offer face to face consultations, alongside

continuing to increase the use of online consultations as part of embedding total triage.

■ Health Services: Females

Sarah Champion: [\[179128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the (a) sexual and reproductive health strategy and (b) women's health strategy will include provisions for creating a central hub of accessible information for patients on menstrual health and other women-specific health concerns.

Sarah Champion: [\[179129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the (a) sexual and reproductive health strategy and (b) women's health strategy will include provisions to improve clinical awareness of heavy menstrual bleeding and associated diagnostics and treatments as recommended by the Menstrual Health Coalition's report Heavy Menstrual Bleeding – breaking silence and stigma, published in March 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

To ensure the Women's Health Strategy reflects what women identify as priorities, the Government launched a 12 week call for evidence which will run until 30 May 2021 to gather women's experiences and views regarding their health and care. The online survey within the call for evidence seeks information on menstrual health, heavy menstrual bleeding and other women-specific health concerns and will be carefully considered as part of our ongoing work on the Strategy.

Accessible information on sexual and reproductive health for women, including access to contraception, will be considered during the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy. Heavy menstrual bleeding will not be covered in this Strategy.

■ Life Expectancy: Disadvantaged

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[179386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons life expectancy decreased from 2010 to 2018 in the most deprived regions of England; and what steps he is taking to reduce the increasing gap in life expectancy between England's most deprived and least deprived regions.

Jo Churchill:

For the most deprived areas, female life expectancy has increased from 78.3 years to 78.7 years and male life expectancy has increased from 72.8 years to 74.1 years from 2008/10 to 2017/19. Inequality in life expectancy between the most and least deprived measured by the slope index of inequality has remained stable for males from 2008/10 to 2017/19 at 9.4 years. For females, the gap has increased from 6.7 years to 7.6 years in the same time period.

Although life expectancy at birth remains the highest it has been, we want everyone to have the same opportunity to have a long, healthy life, whoever they are, wherever they live and whatever their background. Prevention is one of the priorities for the health service and we are taking action to help people live longer and healthier lives. We have refreshed our obesity strategy, we are offering National Health Service health checks, have a tobacco control plan in place and the world's first diabetes prevention programme. The NHS also delivers national vaccination and screening programmes. Delivery of public health services is devolved to local authorities as they are best placed to decide how these resources are provided for their community.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[178950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 11 November 2020 on dementia, reference ZA54485.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 21 April 2021.

Robert Largan:

[\[179690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 7 September 2020 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL11063.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 21 April 2021.

■ **Mental Capacity**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[181141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish an update on the timescale for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Standards.

Navendu Mishra:

[\[181142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will undertake an assessment of the effect of the planned introduction of Liberty Protection Standards on the training standards and implementation of the existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards process.

Helen Whately:

In July 2020 we set out a target date for implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) of April 2022. We are working towards public consultation which will inform our plans for full implementation.

Until the LPS comes into force, it is vital that all bodies with legal duties under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) continue to operate these important safeguards to ensure the rights of people without relevant mental capacity are

protected. The Department is working with national organisations including Health Education England, the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Skills for Care, to ensure that DoLS training continues until the LPS is implemented. In preparation for the implementation of the LPS, organisations should ensure that staff are also up to date with relevant Mental Capacity Act 2005 training.

■ Mental Capacity: Coronavirus

Navendu Mishra:

[\[181143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards not undertaken due to the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps his Department is taking to help adult social services and registered care providers tackle that matter in (a) England, (b) the North West and (c) Stockport.

Helen Whately:

In July 2020 the Care Quality Commission published a report on the 'Impact of COVID-19 on the use of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards' (DoLS), which recorded a significant decrease in the number of DoLS notifications between March 2020 and May 2020, compared with data from the previous year.

There has been no change to DoLS legislation in light of the pandemic and the Department has issued extensive guidance for health and social care staff on applying the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and DoLS during the pandemic. This guidance reiterates the importance of ensuring people have access to the human rights protections the Mental Capacity Act offers and offers advice on COVID-19 testing, deprivation of liberty, DoLS and best interests decision-making. The Department continues to update this guidance based on feedback from stakeholders, including people with lived experience and partners in local government, health and social care.

■ Mental Health: Ethnic Groups

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[181325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to end the disparity in maternal health outcomes between white women and black, asian and minority ethnic women.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have established the Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum to bring together experts to address the inequalities for women and babies from different ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic groups. Additionally, the Chief Midwifery Officer for England is leading work to understand why mortality rates are higher, consider evidence about what will reduce mortality rates and take action to improve equity in outcomes and experience of care for mothers and their babies.

Under measures set out in the 2021/22 Planning Guidance, most women from black, Asian and mixed ethnicity backgrounds will be placed on a continuity of carer

pathway by March 2022. This will ensure that thousands of women receive safe and personal maternity care, improving outcomes for both mother and baby and reducing health inequalities.

■ **NHS: Disclosure of Information**

Justin Madders:

[181032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many current NHS employees have been required to sign Non Disclosure Agreements in 2021 to date.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: This information is not held centrally.

■ **Patients: Death**

Justin Madders:

[178663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Learning from Deaths programme, what recent assessment he has made of the independence of NHS investigation systems.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department works closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement to ensure that there are independent and transparent systems in place to support those affected by patient safety incidents.

Following an assessment of the current systems, NHS England and NHS Improvement are piloting a new Patient Safety Incident Response Framework to replace the current Serious Incident Framework used for investigations. An update on the development of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/serious-incident-framework/>

■ **Smoking: Health Education**

Bob Blackman:

[180469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on campaigns to promote the cessation of smoking in 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

Provisional expenditure by Public Health England on smoking cessation promotion for the financial year 2020-21 was £1,340,000.

■ **Social Services: Conditions of Employment**

Feryal Clark:

[179648]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) increase pay and (b) improve working conditions in the social care sector.

Helen Whately:

The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who set their pay and conditions, independent of central Government.

We have taken steps to support the social care sector during the pandemic, ring-fencing almost £1.8 billion of dedicated funding. This includes infection control funding that can be used on measures such as helping maintain the normal wages of staff who may need to self-isolate. Furthermore, to support the wellbeing of social care workers we have provided a package of emotional, psychological and practical resources throughout the pandemic.

The Government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward plans for workforce reform in 2021.

■ Social Services: Pay**Imran Hussain:**[\[181000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that social care providers are not reducing the amount paid to staff working sleep-in shifts following the Supreme Court ruling of 19 March 2021 on sleep-in shifts.

Imran Hussain:[\[181001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage social care providers to increase payments to staff working sleep-in shifts.

Imran Hussain:[\[181005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to end the use by social care providers of lump-sum payments for staff working sleep-in shifts and to encourage providers to pay staff for all hours spent on sleep-in shifts.

Helen Whately:

The Supreme Court has upheld the Court of Appeal judgment that workers on 'sleep-in' shifts are only entitled to the minimum wage for the time they are awake for the purpose of working.

The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay, independent of central Government. Local authorities work with care providers to determine a fair rate of pay based on local market conditions. The Government is working closely with local authorities and providers in order to consider the implications of the judgement for the sector and next steps.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[180570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including reunification with a non-cohabiting partner on the list of essential international travel exemptions.

Jo Churchill:

At this time travel must be limited to reduce the risk of the virus spreading and of importing or exporting variants of concern. We are unable to extend the reasonable excuses for travel to allow visits to see a non-cohabiting partner abroad.

■ Vaccination: Recruitment

Justin Madders:

[\[134484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the efficiency of the recruitment process for vaccinators who are already medically qualified and registered.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Secondary legislation enabling more healthcare workers to administer flu and COVID-19 vaccines has been introduced to allow the National Health Service to expand the vaccination workforce.

Former healthcare professionals who are still registered in their profession, including those on the temporary register, are no longer required to complete the full statutory and mandatory training package.

The NHS has so far recruited over 13,000 newly trained vaccinators from NHS Professionals and over 19,000 volunteer vaccinators from St John Ambulance.

HOME OFFICE

■ Airguns and Crossbows: Sales and Storage

Rachael Maskell:

[\[183199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress she has made on restricting the sale and storage of (a) crossbows and (b) air guns.

Kit Malthouse:

We published the outcome of our earlier air weapons review along with proposals for new controls in England and Wales, as part of the firearms safety consultation which ran from 24 November 2020 to 16 February 2021. We received over 12,000 responses to the consultation and we will consider these carefully before publishing the Government response.

There are existing controls on both air weapons and crossbows. Retailers are banned from selling crossbows to persons under 18 and legislation is in place to deal with

those who use crossbows as a weapon. We keep the legislation on bladed articles and offensive weapons, including crossbows, under review.

It is already an offence to sell or let on hire air weapons or their ammunition to those under 18 years of age, or for a person under the age of 18 years to purchase or hire an air weapon or ammunition. In relation to storage, the firearms safety consultation proposed strengthening the offence of failing to take 'reasonable precautions' so that whenever under-18s are on the premises, this must include locking an air weapon out of sight when not in use and storing the ammunition separately.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Crime**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[181354]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce alcohol-related crimes.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to reducing alcohol-related crime and ensuring that swift action to tackle alcohol-related offending. In the past year, we have expanded electronic tagging for criminals serving time outside of jail and the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement is now available across courts in England and Wales.

We are focused on establishing effective partnerships between the police, local authorities, local partnership schemes and businesses to take effective actions against alcohol-related crime and harms in the night time economy, which includes plans to improve the safety of women.

We are planning to hold a Summit this summer with police, industry representatives and stakeholders from the violence against women sector to develop plans further. This complements the excellent work that police and other local agencies continue to do to reduce and prevent alcohol related crime.

■ **Frontier Workers: Coronavirus**

Emma Hardy:

[180583]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of exempting frontier workers from the ten day quarantine covid-19 rule when travelling to and from a country at least once every two weeks.

Kevin Foster:

To protect the public and the NHS, the exemptions for frontier workers from the self-isolation requirements have been tightened to limit such activity to only what is really necessary.

People working in the UK who live abroad can only continue to enter the UK for work without self-isolating if their work is covered by one of the sectoral exemptions. They may of still travel to the UK for work if it cannot be done remotely but will need to self-

isolate for the first 10 days if their work is not covered by one of the sectoral exemptions for critical workers.

We have also tightened our requirements for people who live in the UK but work abroad. In order to remain exempt from the requirement to self-isolate on their return from working abroad, such people must be able to show they travel to work in another country at least once a week, their work cannot be done remotely and their work is deemed critical in the country.

These enhanced requirements also protect the exemptions against being abused by those whose work related reason for travel is not absolutely essential.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Stuart C McDonald:

[182056]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the number of outstanding settled status applications ahead of the application deadline; and what steps she is taking to ensure that people with applications outstanding at that date (a) are protected from discrimination in (i) seeking work, (ii) renting accommodation and (iii) providing services and (b) retain full access to public services.

Kevin Foster:

We are committed to ensuring our operational teams have the resources they need to run an efficient and effective system, and we actively monitor workflows to ensure sufficient resources are in place to meet demand. We currently have 1,500 UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) European Casework staff in post.

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the rights of someone who has made a valid application to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) before the deadline of 30 June 2021 will be protected while the outcome of the application is pending. This includes any appeal against a decision to refuse status.

Someone who applies by 30 June 2021 and has not yet been granted status under the EUSS can continue to live their life in the UK as now, until their application is finally determined.

Employers and landlords should provide individuals with every opportunity to demonstrate their right to work and rent and should not discriminate on the basis of race or any of the other protected characteristics.

Legislation provides for a Code of Practice on avoiding unlawful discrimination at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checkscode-of-practice-on-avoiding-discrimination>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-rent-landlords-code-of-practice>

From 1 July, individuals who have made an in time application and are awaiting a decision on their application, will be able to utilise their Certificate of Application as proof of their right to work or rent when verified by Home Office status checking services.

Members: Correspondence**Rosie Cooper:**[\[178954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter dated 12 February 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on weddings, reference ZA55504.

Kit Malthouse:

Given the cross cutting nature of the subject matter of the item of correspondence from the member, we are working with colleagues across Government to provide a comprehensive response. We apologise for the delay and will update the member on progress with the response shortly.

Syria: Refugees**Zarah Sultana:**[\[182101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of providing Syrian refugees who have been stripped of their residency permits in the EU with residency in the UK.

Chris Philp:

We do not currently have plans to make any such assessment.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**Affordable Housing: Hong Kong****Darren Jones:**[\[181091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of the number of people choosing to migrate to the UK from Hong Kong on the availability of affordable housing; and what steps he is taking to ensure that an increase in demand for that housing does not lead to a lack of affordable housing stock for people who need it.

Eddie Hughes:

We are proud to welcome those arriving from Hong Kong who have strong cultural and historical ties to the UK. The Government's new visa route is a generous offer to Hong Kong BN(O) status holders and their family members, who in turn will be expected to be self-sufficient and contribute to UK society.

Approximately 27,000 BN(O) status holders and their family members have applied for a visa since January – this number reflects applications rather than visa holders. The evidence from the Home Office's Impact Assessment published in October 2020 suggests this visa will have a net positive impact on the UK of between £2.4 and £2.9 billion over 5 years.

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in

affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which will provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow.

Further to this, the Secretary of State announced a new £43.1 million UK wide welcome programme to support Hong Kong BN(O) status holders. This will provide support for BN(O) status holders and reduce impacts on resident communities

■ Buildings: Insulation

Clive Lewis:

[180558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to include provisions in the forthcoming Building Safety Bill to guarantee that remedial costs arising from the replacement of dangerous cladding in all buildings, regardless of height, will not be passed on to leaseholders.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has repeatedly said that building owners should step up and not pass these costs on to leaseholders. Where developers or building owners have been unable or unwilling to do so, the Government has stepped in, providing £1.6 billion for the removal of unsafe cladding on buildings of 18 metres and above. With the further £3.5 billion of grant funding recently announced, this will bring the amount provided to an unprecedented over £5 billion.

Buildings below 18 metres will not carry the same inherent risks as a building above 18 metres, however we do understand that some will need cladding remediation. We understand that many leaseholders in blocks below 18 metres are concerned about the cost of remediation, and we want to make sure the residents and leaseholders in these buildings have peace of mind and financial certainty.

To this end, we are establishing a generous financing scheme to ensure cladding removal can take place where required on buildings between 11 and 18 metres. The most a leaseholder will now have to pay towards remediating unsafe cladding is £50 per month.

The Building Safety Bill's provisions will put the management of risk front and centre for buildings of 18 metres and above, and it is important that remediation is addressed using its proactive mechanisms for managing fire and structural safety risks, such as the Safety Case - which does have scope to look at historic defects. Remediation and costs to leaseholders should be dealt with in this context rather than within the Fire Safety Bill, to ensure legislation is coherent with the wider aims and scope of the new regime.

The new building safety regime will systematically address historical structural defects to buildings of 18 metres and above by requiring safety case reviews and reasonable improvements.

Clive Lewis:

[180559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will set out a deadline by which all unsafe cladding in all buildings must be replaced.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government acknowledges that remediation of unsafe cladding is complex, and must be done properly so that it makes buildings and residents safe. However, we still expect remedial works to progress at pace and for building owners to take their responsibilities for making their buildings safe seriously. It is our expectation that building owners will have completed ACM remedial works on all high-rise residential buildings by the end of 2021. The Government has announced new measures that will protect leaseholders who have been affected by unsafe cladding, including a further £3.5 billion for remediation of unsafe cladding on buildings of 18m and above. With the £1.6 billion we had already committed, this now represents an unprecedented over £5 billion investment in building safety through which the Government will fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for leaseholders in residential buildings of 18 metres and over in England.

Clive Lewis:

[180560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of living in buildings with dangerous cladding on the mental health of residents.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG has regular engagement with leaseholder groups and recognises the effect on residents living in high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding. That is why the Government is investing over £5 billion to remediate high rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding.

Mental health is one of the Government's top priorities and we are working across Government to ensure that all people, regardless of their residential situation, get the help and support they need. Where residents of buildings fitted with flammable cladding need mental health support, they should make contact with their GP to discuss these issues so they may be referred to mental health services as appropriate. In addition, we are working with the NHS, Public Health England and MIND, to develop resources signposting all residents to key services to help those concerned about their mental health and financial situation.

■ Buildings: Safety

Clive Lewis:

[180557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Government plans to introduce the Building Safety Bill.

Christopher Pincher:

The Building Safety Bill was published in draft on 20 July 2020 and has recently undergone pre-legislative scrutiny by the HCLG Select Committee. We are currently

considering the Committee's report and recommendations and will introduce the Bill in due course. We recognise that these are important public safety measures; that is why the Government is committed to progressing the Bill as quickly as possible, so that reforms can be implemented in a timely manner and residents can feel safe, and be safe, in their homes.

■ **Community Development: Regeneration**

Darren Jones:

[\[180581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his press release, Right to Regenerate to turn derelict buildings into homes and community assets, published 16 January 2021, whether council-owned land designated as a nature reserve will be exempted from the right to regenerate.

Eddie Hughes:

The Right to Regenerate is about making sure that people and communities can hold public bodies to account, and make sure that public land is put to the best use possible. Designated nature reserves exist to protect the natural environment: the land would clearly be in use, and is highly unlikely to be suitable for disposal. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation, and will publish a formal response in due course.

■ **Hedgehogs**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[180425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of new house building on the level of the hedgehog population.

Christopher Pincher:

The implications of new homes for wildlife, including hedgehogs, will depend on the particular local circumstances of a new development. Our National Planning Policy Framework is clear that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Where there are effects on wildlife due to new development, our planning practice guidance acknowledges the value of incorporating wildlife into development, such as providing safe routes for hedgehogs to travel between sites. Planning conditions can be used to require that a planning permission provides for works that will measurably increase biodiversity and local authorities should take this into consideration when dealing with applications for new homes.

The Government is committed to taking action to recover our threatened native species, such as hedgehogs, red squirrels, water voles and dormice. Our Environment Bill includes measures that will help improve the status of threatened species, including mandating biodiversity net gain.

Andrew Rosindell:

[180426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits for the hedgehog population of requiring construction companies to ensure that cement-based fence panels in new housing developments have ground level tunnels.

Christopher Pincher:

Our planning practice guidance acknowledges the importance of incorporating measures that accommodate wildlife, including hedgehogs, in new developments. The creation and maintenance of safe routes between different habitats is specifically identified as being very important to hedgehogs. The provision of safe routes between habitats could be done via gaps in fencing, tunnels or other methods.

Such measures may not be suitable for all types of site, and care needs to be taken to ensure that any benefits promised will lead to genuine and demonstrable gains for biodiversity. This is why in planning guidance we advise that planning authorities need to make sure that any evidence and rationale supplied by applicants are supported by the appropriate scientific expertise and local wildlife knowledge. Therefore, these measures are not mandatory in all developments and should be considered on case-by-case basis.

■ Housing Infrastructure Fund

Thangam Debbonaire:

[181317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much of the Housing Infrastructure Fund has been allocated, by local authority.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: This information is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>

■ Housing: Fire Prevention

Andrew Gwynne:

[181209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect on the economy of leaseholders (a) losing their home and (b) declaring bankruptcy as a result of the costs of resolving fire safety issues relating to (i) cladding removal, (ii) balcony remediation, (iii) replacing combustible insulation, (iv) replacing missing fire breaks, (v) increased insurance premiums and (vi) waking watches.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: We have not conducted an economic assessment. However, we do recognise the financial pressures being placed on leaseholders as a result of historic remediation costs.

We have been clear that building owners and industry should make buildings safe without passing on costs to leaseholders – and where they have not stepped up, we

have stepped in. The Government is taking the following steps to ease these pressures:

- In relation to removal and replacement of unsafe cladding systems, we are providing over £5 billion of Government grant funding for the removal of unsafe cladding systems from buildings of 18m and above, and a generous finance scheme (under which no leaseholder will need to pay more than £50 per month) for the removal of unsafe cladding systems from buildings of 11-18m in height.
- As part of our Building Safety Fund funding for remediation of unsafe cladding systems, the Government is providing full funding for the replacement of combustible insulation and missing or defective cavity barriers where these form part of the external wall system.
- In relation to insurance premia we recognise that some leaseholders in high rise buildings are facing rises in buildings insurance. Officials, leaseholders, the ABI and British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA) have met to discuss buildings insurance. The Government is working with industry and looking at a range of options.
- In relation to waking watch costs, the Government has announced a £30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund, to promote replacement of costly Waking Watch interim safety measures with fire alarms. This is consistent with guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council published in 2019, which emphasises the need to consider installation of common fire alarms where measures are now, or are likely to be in place for the longer term:
<https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-evacuation-guidance>

■ Leasehold

Olivia Blake:

[182121]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the Government's timeframe is for bringing forward legislative proposals to make it easier for leaseholders to buy their homes, and to extend leases by 990 years.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market.

Under the current system, too many leaseholders find the process for extending their lease or buying their freehold (a process known as enfranchisement) too complex, lacking transparency and prohibitively expensive.

We will reform the process of enfranchisement valuation that leaseholders must follow to calculate the cost of extending their lease or buying their freehold. The Government will abolish marriage value, cap the treatment of ground rents at 0.1% of

the freehold value, prescribe rates for the calculations at market value, and introduce an online calculator.

Through our reforms, the length of a statutory lease extension will increase to 990 years, from 90 years (for flats) and 50 years (for houses). Leaseholders will be able to extend their lease with zero ground rent on payment of a premium. Leaseholders will also be able to voluntarily agree to a restriction on future development of their property to avoid paying 'development value'.

We will translate these measures into law as soon as possible, starting with legislation to set ground rents on newly created leases to zero in the upcoming session. This will be the first part of major two-part legislation to implement leasehold and commonhold reforms in this Parliament.

■ **Property Development: Richmond upon Thames**

Sarah Olney:

[182078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has had discussions on the Homebase Manor Road development proposals in Richmond with (a) Sir Michael Fallon, the Non-Executive Chairman of Avanton and (b) other representatives of that company.

Christopher Pincher:

No discussions have taken place. Details of all Ministerial meetings are published online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/956236/Ministerial_meetings_July_to_Sept_2020.csv/preview.

Officials in the Department were contacted in 2020 by planning consultants for the development seeking advice on timescales for the Department's consideration of the call-in requests.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Department for International Trade: Old Admiralty Building**

Emily Thornberry:

[178916]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much funding has been allocated for the costs of moving her Department into the Old Admiralty Building.

Emily Thornberry:

[178917]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the business case for moving her Department into the Old Admiralty Building.

Greg Hands:

Old Admiralty Building (OAB) is the first Government Hub delivered by the London Whitehall Campus Programme, which aims to consolidate and rationalise the Government's London estate. The Department for International Trade (DIT) and the

Government Art Collection are tenants of the Hub in OAB and the Government Property Agency (GPA) is the landlord.

For financial year 20-21, DIT was allocated £1.38m for the OAB Programme via the Full Business Case submitted by the GPA to HM Treasury. Any request for information in relation to this should be referred to the GPA. A further £0.15m was transferred from the GPA for IT peripherals and £0.45m was allocated from the DIT estates budget.

JUSTICE

■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

Dawn Butler:

[\[182020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to support victims and survivors of domestic violence; and what plans the Government has to amend the six month time limit to report those offences.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse. The landmark Domestic Abuse Bill, due to gain Royal Assent this spring, is key to this, as it will raise awareness of different forms of abuse and transform the response of frontline professionals. In support of the Bill, £125m will be provided to fund the new statutory duty for local authorities to provide safe accommodation for women and their children. This will ensure that women continue to access vital support such as therapy, advocacy and counselling in safe accommodation

In addition, for 2021/22, we are providing more funding to combat domestic abuse, including a £40m package to support survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. We are recruiting 700 more independent sexual violence and domestic abuse advisers (ISVAs/IDVAs) to help support these victims, with a further £11m announced in March.

On time limits for prosecution, we have considered extending the six-month time limit for starting a prosecution for domestic abuse offences, as recommended by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and supported by the Home Affairs Select Committee. We concluded that there would be limited benefit as there is no time limit for the more serious offences that can be tried in the Crown Court, and where prosecution for less serious offences that can only be tried in a magistrates' court is time-barred, the range of potential alternative charges made available by the government are in place to ensure that justice can be done.

■ Prisons: Coronavirus

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[182088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether temporary cells were installed in women's prisons since April 2020 as part of the government's plans to limit the spread of covid-19 in prisons.

Alex Chalk:

We expanded the prison estate by introducing temporary accommodation cells to increase space and help reduce the spread of coronavirus. A total of 112 temporary accommodation cells have been installed in the women's estate at HMP & YOI Drake Hall, HMP & YOI East Sutton Park, HMP Foston Hall and HMP & YOI Askham Grange. This accommodation is part of the quick and decisive action we have taken to limit the spread of the virus across all prison establishments including restricting regimes, minimising inter-prison transfers and compartmentalising our prisons into different units to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals.

■ Prisons: Overcrowding

Dawn Butler:

[\[182016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to (a) tackle overcrowding in prisons and (b) adopt alternative methods to incarceration for low level offenders.

Alex Chalk:

Overcrowding in prisons

In November 2020, this Government announced that it would commit over £4 billion capital funding to make significant progress in delivering 18,000 additional prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s. This includes creating four new prisons over the next six years and expanding another four prisons over the next three years. Construction is well underway on HMP Five Wells, the new prison at Wellingborough in Northamptonshire, and works have started at Glen Parva, Leicestershire. These additional prison places will have a positive impact on lowering the proportion of crowding within the prison estate by providing accommodation that is safe, decent and uncrowded.

The total prison population has also reduced by over 6,000 since the start of the pandemic and, as a result, the total number of prisoners currently held in crowded conditions has reduced. We closely monitor prison population forecasts and the extent to which crowding has reduced in 20/21 will be reflected in the publication of the HMPPS Annual Digest.

Alternative Methods to Custody

In September 2020 this Government published the Sentencing White Paper, which set out an agenda of reform for punishing and rehabilitating low level offenders, including where those offenders can be effectively managed in the community rather than in prison.

Where these reforms require legislation, relevant measures are contained within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill which is currently before Parliament. Reforms include piloting a problem-solving court approach for certain community and suspended sentence orders, extending the use of electronic monitoring, and increasing the usage and availability of Community Sentence Treatment Requirements.

■ **Young Offender Institutions: Restraint Techniques**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[182055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 April to Question 179142 on Young Offender Institutions: Restraint Techniques, if he will publish the (a) terms of reference and (b) names of panel members of the independent restraint and behaviour panel established by the Youth Custody Service; and what (i) criteria and (ii) selection process was used to appoint those members.

Alex Chalk:

The terms of reference for the Youth Custody Service Independent Restraint Review Panel are attached. In order to provide the names of the panel members, we would need to obtain individuals' permission, and therefore I will write to the Honourable Member once this has been received.

An application has been made by the Ministry of Justice Appointments Team for the Chair to be a direct appointment, subject to ministerial approval, who will lead on the application process for subsequent appointments. The terms of reference have been agreed and signed off by the current panel. A meeting is held fortnightly to review progress.

Attachments:

1. Terms of Reference [Youth Custody Service - Independent Restraint Review Panel - Terms of Reference.pdf]

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ **Physician Associates: Regulation**

Anne Marie Morris:

[182053]

To ask the Leader of the House, pursuant to the answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179125, on Physician Associates: Regulation, what steps he is taking to ensure Departments provide substantive answers to Questions within the requested time frame.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

It is a recognised fundamental right of Parliament that hon. members receive full and timely responses to Parliamentary questions and I have reminded all departments of the importance of this. I raised my hon. friend's specific question with the Department of Health and Social Care and I understand that it has now been answered. I will continue to raise hon. members' questions with departments where there is a significant delay or unsatisfactory response.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Abortion: Northern Ireland**

Mrs Maria Miller: [\[914372\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.

Mr Robin Walker:

I recognise the Rt Hon Lady's work on this important issue to date. We have worked hard for a year now to encourage progress from the Department of Health on proper commissioning of the services set out in the regulations a year ago but without success.

While over 1,100 abortions had been provided locally in Northern Ireland since April 2020, services have not been formally commissioned by the Department of Health.

That is why we recently laid further Regulations which provide the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with a power to direct the Department of Health and others to take the action necessary to implement the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW Report. Women and girls in Northern Ireland should have the same rights in this space as those across the rest of the UK.

■ Climate Change Convention: Northern Ireland

Jacob Young: [\[914373\]](#)

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the opportunities for Northern Ireland in COP26.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I have attended cross-government meetings with the COP President, most recently on 22 March. I also recently met with the Chair of the Expert Panel on the Future of Energy to discuss the NI Executive's Energy Strategy and how the UK Government can help in developing this. We continue to press for engagement with the Executive and Northern Ireland businesses in order to promote Northern Ireland's interests.

Recent announcements of New Deal funding to support green technology in Northern Ireland and support for the production of hydrogen buses in Ballymena reflect the priority which this Government has given to decarbonisation. We all want to see Northern Ireland play a big role in the Green Industrial Revolution, and COP26 will provide us an opportunity to showcase Northern Ireland's many advances in green technologies.

■ Trade Agreements: Northern Ireland and Holyhead

Geraint Davies: [\[914368\]](#)

What steps he is taking to increase trade flows between Northern Ireland and Holyhead.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government is committed to strengthening the Union and Northern Ireland's place within it. Increasing trade flows between the four nations of the UK is a key part of that strategy.

That is why the unfettered access protections for qualifying businesses on arrival in Great Britain will apply whether goods are moved directly to Great Britain or indirectly via Ireland - meaning unfettered access whether goods leave Belfast for Cairnryan, or Dublin for Holyhead.

Further to this, the Union Connectivity Review will make recommendations on whether and how to best improve connectivity across the UK.

The interim report identified a ferry route between Warrenpoint and Holyhead as being of further interest to the Panel, to be explored further, so I look forward to seeing the final report.

■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**Mr Philip Hollobone:**[\[914383\]](#)

What recent discussions the Government has had with the EU on improving the implementation of the Northern Ireland protocol.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government has provided a joint work programme to the EU as a first step in working together to resolve the full range of issues that we have identified with the operation of the Protocol.

Our priority now is to move those discussions forward, address concerns, and ensure the Protocol is given effect in the pragmatic and proportionate way intended.

■ United Kingdom**Andrew Griffith:**[\[914370\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to strengthen Northern Ireland's place in the UK.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government has always stressed the importance of the Union. This year is the centenary of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as we know it today, and the Government is committed to levelling up across all four nations of the UK.

The £400m New Deal and the £562m in City and Growth Deals will boost economic growth, with Deals covering the whole of Northern Ireland. This includes the Derry-Londonderry and Strabane City Deal that the Government signed Heads of Terms for in February.

Northern Ireland will also benefit from the Community Renewal Fund, the Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. We will continue working tirelessly for our family of nations going forward.

SCOTLAND■ **Scotland Office: Contact Tracing**

Chris Green: [\[181306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether he has allocated any financial or other resources from his Department's budget to investigate potential future uses by his Department of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland is not the lead UK Government Department responsible for the NHS Test and Trace database system, therefore does not allocate resources, including financial resources to investigate future uses of the system. The lead department is the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Chris Green: [\[181307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department plans to use the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland is not the lead UK Government Department responsible for the NHS Test and Trace database system and does not therefore develop policy relating to the use of the system. The lead department is the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Chris Green: [\[181308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on using the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Mr Alister Jack:

I discuss a wide range of issues relating to the Coronavirus pandemic with Cabinet colleagues on a regular basis. However, The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland is not the lead UK Government Department responsible for the NHS Test and Trace database system policy. The lead department is the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Public Health is a devolved matter in Scotland. NHS Scotland has created NHS Test and Protect and supports the Scottish Government's test, trace, isolate and support strategy.

TRANSPORT■ **Aviation**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[182021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the most popular UK domestic flight routes were in 2019-20.

Robert Courts:

Data on passenger movements on all UK domestic routes for 2019 are published by the Civil Aviation Authority on their website in Table 12.2.

The top 10 domestic flight routes in terms of passengers (excluding for routes to and from UK Crown Dependency airports) in 2019 were:

1. Heathrow – Edinburgh
2. Heathrow – Glasgow
3. Gatwick – Edinburgh
4. Heathrow – Aberdeen
5. Heathrow – Belfast City
6. Gatwick – Glasgow
7. Stansted – Edinburgh
8. Gatwick – Belfast International
9. Stansted – Belfast International
10. Heathrow – Manchester

■ Aviation: Coronavirus**Ruth Jones:**[\[181440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK aviation sector makes a strong recovery once the domestic economy opens up as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Robert Courts:

The report of the Global Travel Taskforce, published on 9 April, clearly sets out how, when the time is right, we will be able to restart international travel safely while managing the risk from imported cases and variants of concern. It has been created following extensive engagement with the international travel and tourism industries, and we are grateful for their valuable contributions to the development of the report's recommendations.

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

■ Aviation: Employment**Ruth Jones:**[\[181437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to support jobs in the aviation sector in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) the UK.

Robert Courts:

The Government fully recognises the impact that COVID-19 is having on the aviation sector. The sector is important to the UK economy and can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, designed to ensure that companies of any size receive the help they need to get through this difficult time.

We have extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) until 30 September 2021. Furloughed employees will continue to receive 80% of their current salary until that date (up to £2,500). 52% of passenger air transport employees were furloughed using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) as of 31 January 2021. We estimate the wider air transport sector will have received around £1 billion in support through CJRS up to the end of April 2021.

Constituents in Newport West, including in the aviation sector, have similarly benefited from this support. By 15 March 2021, 13,100 workers in Newport West had been furloughed using the CJRS.

In addition, the Department for Transport launched the Aviation Skills Retention Platform in February to support skills retention in the sector. This allows aviation sector workers who are currently out of work to register their skills, so they can be matched with relevant jobs opportunities, advice and upskilling opportunities.

■ British Airways: Greenhouse Gas Emissions**Jim Shannon:****[180979]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with British Airways on greenhouse gas emissions; and what steps he is taking to promote more fuel efficient aircraft.

Robert Courts:

The Government is working with the aviation and aerospace sectors on a range of measures to support the decarbonisation of aviation.

The Government is investing £1.95bn in aerospace R&D between 2013 to 2026 through the ATI programme. In addition, we have recently launched the 'Green Fuels, Green Skies' competition, which will provide £15m to support the early development of first-of-a-kind production plants, with the aim of producing sustainable aviation fuel at scale in the UK.

British Airways are a member of the Jet Zero Council, the Plenary of which met again on 16 March 2021. The Jet Zero Council was established to take decisive action on our commitments to achieve net zero aviation with the aim of delivering zero-emission transatlantic flight within a generation.

In the coming months, we will be consulting on our strategy on net zero aviation, setting out the steps we will take to achieve our net zero commitment.

■ Driving Licences: Older People

Dan Jarvis:

[182052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposals to introduce Graduated Driving Licensing for people aged over 70 on the independent personal mobility of older drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has no plans to introduce graduated driving licenses for drivers aged 70 or over.

It is the law that all drivers must tell the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency about any medical conditions which might affect their driving. This rule remains unchanged.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Justin Madders:

[182122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of households have access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure in their local area.

Rachel Maclean:

In January 2021, there were 20,775 public charging devices in the UK or 31 devices per 100,000 population. Each local authority has at least 4 public devices per 100,000 population. In addition, we have provided funding for the installation of over 177,000 domestic chargepoints throughout the UK.

■ Motor Vehicles: Registration

Dan Jarvis:

[182051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness that owners of tax-free vehicles must register their vehicle with the DVLA.

Rachel Maclean:

By law, all mechanically propelled vehicles that are used on public roads must be registered and licensed. Information about registration and licensing is available on GOV.UK and can be found <https://www.gov.uk/vehicle-registration>

In 2019, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency introduced a vehicle excise duty reminder form specifically for vehicles that are subject to a zero rate of vehicle excise duty. The reminder is sent shortly before a vehicle needs to be relicensed and it advises vehicle keepers that they are responsible for making sure that their vehicle is licensed even where there is no payment required. Information on how to relicense a vehicle, including those that attract a zero rate of vehicle excise duty, can be found on GOV.UK [Tax your vehicle - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/tax-your-vehicle)

■ Railways: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[181385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that covid-19 social distancing measures are being adhered to on the rail network; and what steps he is taking to improve adherence to those measures for (a) rail workers, (b) key workers and (c) other passengers.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

From 12 April, operators have increased service levels to around 75% of pre-pandemic levels to reflect the expected increase in demand. There will be a further increase on 17 May, when operators will start to run as close to a full service as possible, recognising that some essential COVID protocols, such as extra cleaning, places constraints on the levels of service that can be run reliably.

In stations across the country, the industry has taken active steps to encourage passengers to practice social distancing, such as train and station announcements, and floor stickers. We have been working closely with operators to ensure that there are appropriate procedures in place, which are communicated clearly to passengers. For instance, passengers are urged to use the whole length of the train to board to avoid overcrowding in one carriage. Operators are continuing to explore ways to promote social distancing further through other methods, such as Advance ticket purchases and 'reservation only' seats.

Ruth Jones:

[\[181441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to help ensure the safety of rail workers as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, the safety of all rail workers and passengers continues to be our priority. We have issued comprehensive guidance to train operators on the steps they need to take to protect staff in line with Public Health England advice, as well as safer travel guidance for passengers, both of which are regularly reviewed and updated.

Operators are planning to increase service levels in line with the roadmap and the levels of demand observed on the network, alongside taking active steps to encourage social distancing and manage passenger flows with crowd management plans and ability to draw on additional staff if needed.

■ River Thames: Closures

Sarah Olney:

[\[182075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the (a) London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and (b) Port of London Authority on legal responsibility for the closure of the River Thames at Hammersmith Bridge.

Rachel Maclean:

As asset owners, London Borough Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) are responsible for the closure of Hammersmith Bridge. In August 2020, LBHF instructed the Port of London Authority (PLA) to close the river under the bridge.

LBHF and PLA are both members of the Government-led Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce. Within this forum, discussion on the closure of Hammersmith Bridge is ongoing. To date, the Taskforce has met 14 times. Our continued leadership through the Taskforce has meant that the Case for Continued Safe Operation Board accepted PLA's proposal to allow limited and controlled river transits when there are no workers on the bridge; this is only for vessels which cannot carry out their activity elsewhere on the river.

Discussions continue at officials' level between the Department, LBHF and the PLA. DfT engineers have also extensively engaged with their counterparts at LBHF to offer support in evaluating the condition of the bridge

Road Traffic Control**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[182022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of setting targets under the (a) Traffic Reduction Act 1997 and (b) Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998 to reduce road traffic levels year on year.

Rachel Maclean:

No recent assessment has been made of either the Traffic Reduction Act 1997 or the Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998. However, the department has been focussed on encouraging people towards active travel and public transport. This is demonstrated by the March publication of: 'Bus Back Better', our ambitious National Bus Strategy for England; 'Gear Change', our bold vision for cycling and walking, published last year, and; the current development of a transport decarbonisation plan.

Shipping: Carbon Emissions**Alan Brown:**[\[181062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent meetings he has held with the maritime sector on the role of maritime decarbonisation as a matter to be raised at COP26.

Robert Courts:

Ministers and officials are having regular discussions with the maritime sector on the topics of decarbonisation and COP26, as decarbonising shipping is essential to achieving the target of net zero greenhouse gases across the economy by 2050 and delivering on the International Maritime Organisation 'Initial Strategy on the Reduction of GHG from Ships'. These discussions will continue to intensify in the coming months to support efforts towards maritime decarbonisation at COP26 and beyond.

■ Transport: Infrastructure**Sir Geoffrey Cox:**[\[180448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the transport infrastructure needs of rural and coastal communities in the South West region.

Rachel Maclean:

Local areas are best placed to assess their transport infrastructure needs. With DfT funding, the two sub-national transport bodies in the South West, Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway, are in the process of developing transport strategies for their regions which will look at the entirety of the South West's transport needs.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Afzal Khan:**[\[179510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing foreign travel for people separated from their partners regardless of marital status during the covid-19 outbreak.

Robert Courts:

The decision to introduce enhanced border measures is in direct response to scientific and medical data, which represents an increased risk to UK public health and an increased risk of community transmission of the new COVID-19 variants identified in other countries. These are intended to be temporary measures and the government keeps data for countries and territories under constant review.

The government has made it consistently clear that it will take decisive action to contain the virus, including adding further countries to the red list if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high.

There are an extremely limited number of exemptions from enhanced border measures, and only introduced where absolutely necessary for reasons of national importance. Exemptions from enhanced border measures are set out on Gov.uk and are kept under regular review.

TREASURY**■ Capital Allowances****Matt Vickers:**[\[180641\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plant and machinery will qualify for the super-deduction.

Jesse Norman:

All new main rate plant and machinery is eligible for the super-deduction, save assets purchased for leasing. HM Treasury have published more detail in the super-deduction factsheet, available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/967202/Super_deduction_factsheet.pdf.

Cars: Excise Duties**Margaret Ferrier:****[180529]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of reducing Vehicle Excise Duty for cars initially priced in excess of £40,000 that are being resold second-hand.

Kemi Badenoch:

Petrol, diesel and hybrid cars with a list price when new exceeding £40,000 pay an additional Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) supplement for five years as well as paying the standard rate of VED, which means those who can afford the most expensive cars pay more than the standard rate imposed on other drivers. As around 88% of all new cars have a list price below £40,000, this was considered a suitable threshold for distinguishing the luxury end of the market.

With regard to used vehicles, whilst the sale price of these cars may be below £40,000, the additional supplement is based solely on the original list price, which provides a clear and easy to understand measure of a car's value as published by manufacturers. As the additional supplement is only payable for five years, slightly older cars pay the supplement for a shorter period of time.

As with all taxes, VED remains under review and any changes are considered by the Chancellor.

Debts: Coronavirus**Carla Lockhart:****[180652]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will consider introducing a personal loan scheme similar to the Bounce Back Scheme to provide people in debt with a low interest route to financial wellbeing in the context of increasing household debt levels as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

While the total amount of outstanding lending to individuals has increased by 0.9% since February 2020. The growth rate was below pre-pandemic levels and has mostly been driven by an increase in lending for house purchases. Since February 2020, the amount of outstanding consumer credit has fallen by 13.2%.

To support households that have been affected by Covid-19, we have put in place unprecedented support – including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and a package of welfare measures on which we spent an additional £7.4 billion in the 2020-21 financial year.

We have also taken specific action to support those in debt or in need of affordable credit as a result of Covid-19. For those facing temporary payment difficulties as a result of the pandemic, we worked with the FCA to introduce mortgage and consumer credit payment holidays. The Government has also agreed to maintain record levels of debt advice funding for the Money and Pension Service in 2021-22. To support access to affordable credit, since 2019, the Government has allocated £96 million of dormant assets funding to Fair4All Finance. Fair4All Finance was founded to improve the financial wellbeing of those who are financially vulnerable through fair and affordable financial products and services.

With respect to setting up a loan scheme, at Budget, HM Treasury announced it would provide up to £3.8 million of funding to deliver a pilot No-Interest Loans Scheme. The scheme will support vulnerable consumers who would benefit from affordable rather than high-cost credit to meet unexpected costs.

■ Free Zones: Northern Ireland

Colum Eastwood:

[\[180649\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made in establishing a freeport in Northern Ireland; and what engagement has been carried out with Foyle Port to identify Derry City and the North West as a site for a freeport.

Steve Barclay:

At Budget, the Chancellor announced 8 Freeports from 8 regions of England, as selected by the Secretary of State for the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government – this followed the fair, open and transparent assessment process outlined in the Bidding Prospectus.

We want to ensure that the whole of the UK can benefit, not just England. We have been in discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive to establish at least one Freeport in Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

■ Rural Areas: Infrastructure

Sir Geoffrey Cox:

[\[180449\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that deprived rural and coastal communities receive a fair allocation of per capita spending on public infrastructure.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government's levelling up agenda aims to spread opportunity and investment across every region and nation of the UK—including in rural and coastal communities. We will deliver this pledge by boosting jobs, wages and prospects for all communities. At Budget the Government also announced policies that will benefit those communities most in need, including the first round of the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund—designed to drive regeneration in places that have received less Government investment in recent years. On top of this, the next £5.2 billion Flood and Coastal Defence programme kickstarts in this month, and we are allocating £1.2bn over four

years to support the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband in hard-to-reach areas—the start of our £5bn UK Gigabit programme.

■ SME Brexit Support Fund

Kevin Brennan:

[180415]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits to businesses of the SME Brexit Support Fund.

Jesse Norman:

The £20 million SME Brexit fund enables traders to access practical support, including training for new customs, rules of origin and VAT processes. It allows smaller businesses to apply for grants of up to £2,000 to help them adapt to new customs and tax rules when trading with the EU. Small and medium-sized enterprises can also use this money to seek professional advice in these areas.

■ Thalidomide

Alison Thewliss:

[182065]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March to Question 164514, what the Barnett Consequentials are for (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) Northern Ireland of his Budget 2021 announcement on funding for the Thalidomide Health Grant Renewal.

Steve Barclay:

Further to my previous answer, at spending reviews the Barnett formula is generally applied to the overall change in each department's funding, rather than being applied at programme level.

It is not therefore possible to specify the Barnett consequentials generated by the funding for the Thalidomide Health Grant Renewal at the 2020 Spending Review. However, I can confirm that the 2020 Spending Review provided the devolved administrations with a combined additional £4.7 billion for 2021-22 through the Barnett formula.

Funding for 2022-23 onwards will be determined at the upcoming spending review.

■ UK Infrastructure Bank: Finance

Matt Vickers:

[180638]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the procedures by which the UK Infrastructure Bank will be allocated the £12 billion of equity and debt capital.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published further details on the design of the UK Infrastructure Bank alongside Budget in March. This can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policy-design-of-the-uk-infrastructure-bank>.

In total, the Bank will have £22 billion of financial capacity to deliver on its objectives:

- £5 billion will be made available as equity from HM Treasury
- the Bank will also be able to borrow up to £7 billion from a government credit facility administered by the Debt Management Office (DMO) and also private markets.
- of its £12 billion of equity and debt capital, £4 billion will be allocated to local authority lending, providing a significant commitment to this wing of its operations
- the Bank will have initial authority to issue up to £10 billion of guarantees, as the Bank takes on responsibility for the UK Guarantee Scheme, with more available subject to review

The Bank will have significant flexibility as to when it draws down its equity capital and be able to borrow up to £1.5bn a year. The Government will publish a framework document ahead of the Bank's launch, setting out further details on governance and the relationship with government.

WALES

■ Fisheries: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Ruth Jones:

[\[181436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Welsh fishing industry on the effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on their ability to operate.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with stakeholders, including those from the seafood sector on maximising opportunities from the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement.

Having left the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, Welsh fishermen and women will be in a position to rebuild our fishing fleet and increase quotas in the coming years. That is why on 24 March, we announced how the additional quota secured as a result of leaving the EU would be shared between the four UK administrations this year. This approach was agreed with the Welsh Government and delivers uplifts for the Welsh industry in sole, plaice and other important stocks.

We recognised the disruption caused to seafood exporters by delays at the border in the early part of this year. To address this, we launched the £23m package of support to deliver the Seafood Disruption Scheme and Seafood Response Fund. This is designed to help UK fishing and shellfish aquaculture businesses that have been affected by the downturn of export and domestic markets for fish and shellfish due to the coronavirus pandemic and/or disruption to seafood exports earlier this year

■ Television Licences: Older People

Ruth Jones:

[\[181433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of free TV licenses on people aged over 75 in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales.

Simon Hart:

The Government remains deeply disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over-75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s across the UK, including those in the Newport West constituency and Wales as a whole and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

In the 2015 funding settlement, the government agreed with the BBC that responsibility for the concession would transfer to the BBC in June 2020. This reform was subject to public discussion and debated extensively during the passage of the Digital Economy Act 2017 through Parliament. This legislation provides that the future of the concession is the responsibility of the BBC, not of the government.

The Government has been clear that the BBC must ensure that it supports those affected by its decision, and it must look at how it uses its substantial licence fee income to support older people.

■ UK Research and Innovation: Overseas Aid

Ruth Jones:

[\[181434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the effect of the recent reduction in Official Development Assistance funding to UK Research and Innovation on Welsh universities.

Simon Hart:

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

The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are currently working with UKRI, and all the Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners, to manage the financial year 2021/22 ODA allocations, including which projects will be going ahead. These Delivery Partners have communicated with award holders setting out the next stage of the review of ODA funding next year, and to explore options for individual programmes. Due to the ongoing nature of this process, until it is complete, we cannot share project-level details.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021**Ruth Jones:**[\[181435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Welsh Government on preparations for COP26.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with the Welsh Government and Cabinet colleagues on a wide range of climate change matters, including the preparations for COP26 to ensure an inclusive and ambitious COP26 for the whole of the UK. This includes when I recently met the Welsh Government Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs at the COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group on 22 March 2021.

The COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group brings together the COP26 President Designate, Territorial Secretaries of State and climate change ministers from the devolved administrations to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 and will meet quarterly in the run up to the summit. There is also ongoing official-level engagement with the Welsh Government on COP26.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Sign Language****Holly Mumby-Croft:**[\[180661\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps he is taking to encourage (a) local authorities and (b) other organisations to promote and raise awareness of British Sign Language.

Kemi Badenoch:

Equality legislation means that employers, service providers and public bodies have to provide services in BSL and other formats when it is reasonable to do so. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the needs of a range of protected characteristics, including disability.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Chemicals: EU Law****Ruth Jones:**[\[181431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is the Health and Safety Executive's policy not to initiate a restriction on a substance on which an opinion has been adopted by the European Chemicals Agency.

Mims Davies:

An annual UK REACH Work Programme will be developed and published; this will include activity on new restrictions. Working with the Environment Agency, Defra and relevant officials from the Scottish and Welsh governments, HSE will identify priorities for restriction. These may include restrictions already addressed by the European Chemicals Agency. The preparation of restriction dossiers by HSE will address concerns deemed to be the most pressing for Great Britain, and any further measures taken to safeguard human health and the environment will be based on the best available evidence and robust science.

Food Banks: Knowsley**Sir George Howarth:**[\[180404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the (a) effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of food bank usage in Knowsley and (b) potential merits of holding discussions with food bank centres in Knowsley on tackling poverty.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made. There is no consistent and accurate measure of food bank usage at a constituency or national level.

This Government is committed to tackling poverty and officials from the Department continue to engage on this issue with a wide range of stakeholders, including food bank operators. Throughout this pandemic, this Government has delivered an unprecedented package of support and, for those in most need, injected billions into the welfare system. Our Covid Winter Grant Scheme has provided £229m to Local Authorities in England to enable them to support people with food and essential utility bills during the coldest months. Building on this, we have now introduced the £40m Covid Local Support Grant which will run to the 20th June.

Kickstart Scheme**Drew Hendry:**[\[182071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of publishing the number of Kickstart Scheme applications that have been rejected by region.

Mims Davies:

A regional breakdown of applications to the Kickstart Scheme is not currently held by the Department for Work and Pensions. This is because applications at the approval stage of Kickstart only provide the registered address of the applying organisation (employer or Gateway) and so are not reflective of where the jobs would be based if approved. Employers and Gateway organisations can make multiple applications to the scheme. And some employers within Gateway application may be rejected while others are approved. This data is therefore of limited use for analytical and planning

purposes. For these reasons, information is not currently produced on application outcomes by region.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

Dame Diana Johnson: [182024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether personal independence payment awards made following a successful appeal will be extended in line with those payments that secured the correct award on application.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Right Honourable Member to the answer I gave on 12 April 2021 to Question UIN [179256](#).

■ **Reach Independent Scientific Expert Pool**

Ruth Jones: [180611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how the Health and Safety Executive plans to obtain independent scientific knowledge and advice on chemicals in advance of the establishment of the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool.

Mims Davies:

The UK REACH legislation specifically highlights that the commissioning of independent scientific knowledge and advice (ISA) should be considered in the formation of opinions on restrictions and applications for authorisation.

HSE is currently recruiting independent experts for the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool (RISEP) and expects this process to be complete next month. Recruitment was planned to ensure RISEP is in place before being needed in the restriction and applications for authorisation process.

In line with UK REACH legislative requirements, the Agency has published a statement on the HSE REACH website (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/reach/reach-independent-scientific-expert-pool.htm>) on how it will take account of ISA in the UK REACH process.

■ **Redundancy: Older People**

Yvette Cooper: [175713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support people aged 60 and over who have been made redundant and who are ineligible to claim universal credit and have not yet reached the state pension age.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 13 April 2021]: The Department recognises that work is the best route to prosperity. Claimants who are not eligible for Universal Credit may be eligible for contributory benefits, which are not means tested. Claimants in receipt of contributory benefits can access our wider Jobcentre offer, including tailored support from a dedicated Work Coach.

Furthermore, the Rapid Response Service (RRS) supports eligible people regardless of age who are serving their notice period, whether from compulsory redundancy or other workforce measures such as an early release scheme. The RRS offer is flexible and includes a range of options that can be pulled together into an appropriate support package. Those who do not find alternative employment before losing their job can access the same support as those under notice of redundancy for a period of 13 weeks, irrespective of whether they make a claim for benefit or not.

Mid-life MOTs, which offer support from the National Careers Service, Public Health England and Money and Pensions Service are freely available to anyone considering a change in career.

People who are not in receipt of any benefits can still access support on-line. Find a Job is the Government's official job matching service for those looking for work, employers looking to recruit and recruitment agencies who recruit on their behalf. In addition, the DWP launched the JobHelp website, which provides useful guidance and tools for jobseekers including hints and tips, job search advice, information about recruiting sectors and signposts to job vacancies to help people successfully find work.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[182023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of suspending, or raising, the benefit cap during the covid-19 outbreak to allow the uplift to reach a greater number of children at risk of poverty.

Mims Davies:

There are currently no plans to make changes to the benefit cap. The Benefit Cap restores fairness between those receiving out-of-work benefits and taxpayers in employment. Helping claimants back into work, including through delivery of our Plan for Jobs, remains a primary focus. Returning to employment will significantly increase the likelihood of a household not being affected by the cap, as it does not apply where households have monthly earnings of at least £617.

The Government firmly believes that it is in the best interests of children to be in working households where possible because work, particularly full time work, substantially reduces the likelihood of being in poverty.

Claimants can approach their Local Authority for a Discretionary Housing Payment if they need additional help to meet rental costs.

■ **Vespex: Pest Control**

Sir Paul Beresford:

[\[180385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether Vespex, a product manufactured by Merchanto for controlling wasp populations, is under consideration for use in the UK.

Mims Davies:

No, the company has not made an application for a biocidal product authorisation and so the product Vespex is not under consideration for use in the UK.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOME OFFICE

■ Emergency Services Network: Ceredigion

Ben Lake:

[\[179375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, of the Extended Area Services (EAS) mast sites that are located in Ceredigion how many (a) have been designed and have received planning approval, (b) are awaiting physical work to connect the mast to the network and (c) are awaiting final activation.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 April 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Kit Malthouse:

In your constituency of Ceredigion, there are 11 EAS sites, 8 of which have been designed and have completed the planning approval stage. 4 of the sites have completed the passive build stage.

For reference the key stages are:

- 1) building the structure (this is known as 'passive build')
- 2) connecting the mast to the network, either by a cable link, microwave link or (on occasions) via a satellite connection
- 3) activating the mast for operational use for the emergency services

The table attached provides an update on each sites' progress and shows when power is forecast to be provided along with a forecast for site activation. After the award of the contract to connect to the network in Autumn 2021, we anticipate that a survey of each site will result in activation timelines varying depending on the work involved, therefore the dates forecast for activation may change accordingly.

Attachments:

1. [Table for PQ 179375.docx](#)

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment: Bolton

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[174070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to assist young people aged 16 to 25 to find work in Bolton.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 April 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Mims Davies:

Our 13-week Youth Employment Programme delivers wrap-around support for many of the Plan for Jobs initiatives, and helps young people to take up work-related training or a job. This includes our Kickstart Scheme, which has seen over 150,000 young people starting work, a traineeship, an apprenticeship and Sector-based Work Academy Programmes. The Youth Employment Programme is live and our dedicated Work Coaches are delivering the programme to young people.

The Jobcentre team in Bolton have partnered with a number of local employers and organisations to provide a varied network of support for young people aged 16-25 in the Bolton area, including Mentoring Circles, Sector Work Academy Programmes, Kickstart Opportunities, a Work Academy with the University of Bolton, and provision for young people that are not currently in education or employment with Bolton College and Connexions.

In addition, Bolton has two Youth Hubs, based in Westhoughton and Farnworth, providing outreach support for young people, and our Jobcentre Youth Employability Coaches are providing flexible support to young people with significant complex needs and barriers to help them move into employment and offering six weeks of in-work support when they start work.

Our 13-week Youth Employment Programme (YEP) delivers wrap-around support for many of the Plan for Jobs initiatives, and helps young people to take up work-related training or a job. This includes jobs created through the Kickstart scheme, which has seen over 180,000 job placements approved. The YEP is live and our dedicated Work Coaches are delivering the programme to young people, supporting them moving into work, a traineeship, an apprenticeship, or to take part in one of our Sector-based Work Academy Programmes.

The Jobcentre team in Bolton have partnered with a number of local employers and organisations to provide a varied network of support for young people aged 16-25 in the Bolton area, including Mentoring Circles, Sector Work Academy Programmes, Kickstart Opportunities, a Work Academy with the University of Bolton, and provision for young people that are not currently in education or employment with Bolton College and Connexions.

In addition, Bolton has two Youth Hubs, based in Westhoughton and Farnworth, providing outreach support for young people, and our Jobcentre Youth Employability Coaches are providing flexible support to young people with significant complex needs and barriers to help them move into employment and offering six weeks of in-work support when they start work.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Regulating Consumer Connected Product Cyber Security

Minister for Digital Infrastructure (Matt Warman):

[\[HCWS934\]](#)

This government has ambitious plans to ensure that the increasingly diverse range of consumer products that can connect to the internet are more secure by having cyber security designed into them by default.

Since 2018, the UK has been recognised by industry and the security research community as defining a world leading approach of strong cyber security measures for connected products. My department published a Code of Practice for Consumer Internet of Things (IoT) Security on 14 October 2018. Developed in collaboration with industry and cyber security experts, this set out thirteen outcome-led guidelines that manufacturers would need to implement in order to improve the cyber security of their consumer IoT products. The UK Government has also contributed significantly to the first globally-applicable industry standard on consumer IoT Security - ETSI EN 303 645.

Our work has since been endorsed and supported by the 'Five Eyes' (a collective statement of intent was published in 2019) as well as the Australian government (their 2020 Code of Practice consists of the same thirteen principles as those we published in 2018), the governments of Singapore and Finland (whose national IoT labelling schemes reflects our work), and the government of India (who published a draft Code of Practice advocating the same thirteen guidelines of our 2018 Code of Practice).

The Government initially encouraged industry to resolve the issue of insecure consumer connected products voluntarily. However, despite the publication of the Code of Practice and the development of industry standards, in many cases, poor security practices remain commonplace.

In May 2019, DCMS launched a consultation on regulatory proposals advocating a minimum baseline cyber security requirement. There was widespread support for the UK Government seeking to regulate the security of consumer connected products. From July to September 2020, the Government ran a call for views on detailed proposals to regulate the cyber security of these products, to ensure they are more secure for people to use.

I am pleased to inform the House that today we are publishing a [government response](#) to this call for views. We summarise the feedback received in response to the call for views as well as set out the Government's response to that feedback, and provide an overview of our updated policy intentions for regulation in this space.

In line with the intentions detailed in the document published today, we will introduce legislation as parliamentary time allows to protect consumers from insecure connected products. This regulation will apply to all consumer connected products such as smart speakers, smart televisions, connected doorbells, connected toys and smartphones, with some specific exemptions due to the specific circumstances of how certain devices are

constructed, secured, and regulated, or the impact that regulating these products would have. The security requirements that will be mandated will align with the UK Code of Practice, and international standards, so are familiar to all manufacturers and other relevant parties across industry. The legislation will also provide powers to investigate allegations of non-compliance and to take steps to ensure compliance.

As a reserved matter, these proposed amendments will apply across the UK. The security of consumer smart products is a priority across the whole of the UK, and my officials will continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations on this policy.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ FCDO Update

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab): [\[HCWS935\]](#)

UK Official Development Assistance departmental allocations 2021-22

The FCDO has responsibility for delivering £8,115m of Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend this year, approximately 80% of total UK ODA. I have recently concluded the FCDO's internal business planning process to allocate this budget for 2021/22 in accordance with UK strategic priorities against a challenging financial climate as a result of COVID. This statement updates the House on the conclusions of that process.

Throughout the business planning process, we strived to ensure that every penny of the FCDO's ODA spend brings maximum strategic coherence, impact and value for taxpayers' money.

The resulting portfolio marks a strategic shift, putting our aid budget to work alongside our diplomatic network, our science and technology expertise and our economic partnerships in tackling global challenges. We will focus on core HMG priorities for poverty reduction, including getting more girls into school, providing urgent humanitarian support to those who need it most, and tackling global threats like climate change, COVID recovery and other international health priorities. Based on OECD data for 2020, the UK will be the third largest donor within the G7 as a percentage of GNI.

The Integrated Review has helped guide the process, by setting out how an independent and sovereign global Britain will act as a force for good and use its influence to shape the future international order. To deliver that vision I have allocated resources to the seven priorities I set out to Parliament on 26 November:

- **Climate and biodiversity.** FCDO will maintain a strong climate and biodiversity portfolio of £534m as we host COP26. In total, the FCDO will deliver more than £941m of activities this year, across all themes, that count towards the UK's flagship £11.6bn International Climate Finance target
- **Global health security.** FCDO will spend £1,305m on global health. We will focus on the UK's position at the forefront of the international response to Covid-19,

through our commitments to COVAX, GAVI and WHO, and through bilateral spend where the need is greatest in Africa.

- Girls' education. FCDO will spend £400m on girls' education. We will invest directly in over 25 countries, helping to achieve the global target to get 40 million girls into education and demonstrating our commitment at this year's Global Partnership for Education summit.
- Humanitarian preparedness and response. FCDO will spend £906m to maintain the UK's role as a force for good at times of crisis, focusing our work on those countries most affected by risk of famine, including Yemen, Syria, Somalia, and South Sudan. A £30m crisis reserve will enable us to respond rapidly to new crises.
- Science & Technology. FCDO will make £251m of R&D investments across all seven themes of this strategy, with £38m targeted directly at science and technology including new innovations to tackle development challenges, including innovations in satellite imagery and AI to support humanitarian responses.
- Open societies and conflict resolution. FCDO will spend £419m to harness the UK's unique strengths in conflict management and resolution, and to project our support for democratic values and institutions, human rights, and freedom of religious belief. We will further drive impact and support democratic values and institutions through our diplomacy, including our new sanctions policy, which will shortly be extended to cover corruption. We have also protected Civil Society programmes, particularly Comic Relief, Commonwealth Veterans, Jo Cox Memorial grants within UK Aid Direct, UK Aid Match and VSO.
- Economic development and trade. FCDO will spend £491m to support new trade relationships with developing country partners, complementing our wider multilateral and capital investments to build the trade and investment partners of the future. We will use CDC and multilateral partners to drive mutually beneficial growth with strategic partners in circumstances where private sector investment is not practicable.

A further £3,159m will meet the government's cross-cutting contributions to multilateral partners and global funds, including our pledge to remain the largest donor to IDA19, the African Development Fund, and other multilateral development banks; support Arms-Length Bodies such as the British Council; and cover FCDO operating costs. This is complemented by the ODA spent by other government departments, which I set out in a Written Ministerial Statement on 26 January 2021.

Within this framework, I have also ensured that the UK is able to exert maximum influence as a force for good in Africa and strategically tilt towards the Indo-Pacific. FCDO will spend around half its bilateral ODA budget in Africa, where human suffering remains most acute, including a major shift to East Africa to reflect the UK's unique role and clear national strategic interest. One third of FCDO bilateral ODA will be spent in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia, in support of our deeper engagement in that region, promoting open societies, reinforcing trade links and promoting climate change collaboration.

In China , I have reduced FCDO's ODA for programme delivery by 95% to £0.9m (with additional ODA in this year only to meet the contractual exit costs of former programmes). The remaining £900,000 will fund programmes on open societies and human rights.

The UK remains a world leader in international development, not only through the impact of these financial allocations but also through the creation of the FCDO, integrating diplomacy and development to deliver greater impact. We will return to our commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income on ODA when the fiscal situation allows.

Thematic allocation

THEMATIC AREA	FCDO ODA ALLOCATION 2021/22, £M
Climate change and biodiversity	534
COVID and global health	1,305
Girls' education	400
Humanitarian preparedness and response	906
Open societies and conflict	419
Science, research and technology	38 (plus thematic R&D)
Trade and economic development	491
Financial transactions	863
Programmes with cross cutting themes	1,940
ALBs, International Subscriptions and other fixed costs	1,219
Total	8,115

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Update: State Pension Underpayments

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman): [\[HCWS933\]](#)

I wish to update the House on the State Pension correction activity that is addressing historical errors, that were unaddressed by successive Governments, following on from my statement on 4 March.

We are fully committed to ensuring that any historical errors are addressed as quickly as possible to ensure that individuals receive the State Pension they are rightfully due in law. While I am pleased to report that good progress has been made in the examination of

cases, this is a complex and resource intensive process requiring the clerical examination of many thousands of State Pension records.

The Department already has a dedicated team of over 150 people working on the correction activity. Throughout 2021/22 we intend to increase significantly the capacity of the team with the recruitment of an additional 360 staff. We expect this additional resource will speed up the correction activity, with the aim to complete the exercise by the end of 2023.

However, it is important to note that estimates on the numbers affected, and costs, are currently based on highly complex scans of the computer system, analysis of DWP administrative data and very small samples of cases randomly selected and reviewed. They are highly uncertain and will be further refined by our analysts as the correction activity progresses and we are able to base estimates on management Information gathered from cases actually reviewed and corrected.

Individuals who are in the affected groups do not need to contact the Department. We are in the process of issuing letters to all those found to be underpaid in accordance with the law, explaining how much they will be receiving in arrears and the reasons for the change to their State Pension rate.

The Department will publish further information on the progress of the State Pension correction activity around the time of the next fiscal event.