



Daily Report

Monday, 26 April 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 26 April 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:36 P.M., 26 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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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

■ Business: Females

Colleen Fletcher:

[184476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support women in business in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry and (c) England.

Paul Scully:

The Government has put in place a range of business measures that support all businesses, including those run by women. The Government loan schemes have provided a lifeline to thousands of businesses across the UK during the pandemic – helping them to survive and protecting millions of jobs.

Businesses have been supported in all regions through the Covid-19 pandemic via the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs). As of January 2021, the value of support given to businesses in the Coventry North East constituency regarding CBILS and BBLs is more than £65 million. Many of the businesses receiving this support will be led by women or employ women.

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 between the programme's launch in 2012 and the end of February 2021. Over the same period, in the Coventry North East constituency, 136 loans have been made worth £1,120,370. 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 83,038. Of all Start Up Loans issued across the United Kingdom to January 2021, 40% of all loans went to women who make up 17% of the overall SME population. In 2021/22 Start Up Loans is expanding to 11,000 loans per year, which will further support women entrepreneurs.

This Government is also committed to supporting our entrepreneurs and this is why all the Government's business finance schemes and COVID support schemes, are open to eligible businesses from all regions and backgrounds, including female entrepreneurs.

In addition, the Government's business advice pages on GOV.UK also provide information and guidance relevant to starting, growing and maintaining a business which women can benefit from. All details can be found online:

www.gov.uk/browse/business. The 'Business Finance Finder' also on GOV.UK is an online tool which firms can tailor by region and to suit the size and stage of their business and the type of finance needed: www.gov.uk/business-finance-support.

The Alison Rose review was an independent review of women entrepreneurs commissioned by government which shed renewed light on the barriers faced by women starting and growing businesses and identified ways of unlocking this untapped talent. In response, the government announced an ambition to increase the number of female entrepreneurs by half by 2030, equivalent to nearly 600,000 additional female entrepreneurs. The Rose Review report and government response set out the steps being taken by government and industry to help achieve this ambition. Over the past year, great progress has been made in delivering on the 8 initiatives of the Rose Review. HM Treasury has launched the Investing in Women Code. To date, the code has 22 signatories. NatWest launched a £1bn fund on 24th January 2020 to support female entrepreneurs. There is more to do and we look forward to continuing the work to deliver the 8 initiatives.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Contact Tracing**

Chris Green: [\[182063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on future uses of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Paul Scully:

No assessment has yet been made, nor any decisions made, on whether to use the data systems used by NHS Test and Trace for other purposes beyond those related to Covid-19. Any work to assess potential future uses of these data systems would be met from within the financial resources already allocated to NHS Test and Trace for the 2021/22 financial year.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries**

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[181348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support the domestic exploitation of raw materials for the electric car industry.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government recognises the importance of critical raw minerals for the development of zero emission vehicles. We are committed to building an agile, innovative and cost-competitive supply chain for these vehicles in the UK to support our commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030.

Batteries for electric vehicles require a range of critical materials, including lithium. Government has supported a number of initiatives to find and use lithium in the UK, including work in Cornwall to develop lithium extraction plants.

The Government is also investing £318m in the Faraday Battery Challenge to put the UK at the global forefront of the design, development, manufacturing, and recycling of electric batteries. In addition, the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) aims to develop and embed at pace the next generation of cutting-edge zero emission

automotive technologies in the UK. £500m of funding for the ATF will be made available in the next four years for businesses across the UK to fund investments across the whole supply chain.

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Portsmouth

Edward Miliband:

[184381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the (a) Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth and (b) Minister for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility have had discussions (i) in person and (ii) by e-mail with relevant stakeholders on the Aquind Interconnector project.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Information regarding meetings of ministers with stakeholders is published online^[1], and there have been no discussions or email correspondence between my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and I, and stakeholders from the Aquind interconnector project.

All applications for development consent are dealt with by the Department in line with Government Propriety Guidance. Neither the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State nor I will have any role in the decision.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>

■ Gratuities

Stella Creasy:

[184436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 20 March 2018 to Question 132797, what the timetable is for the publication of his Department's response to the 2016 consultation on tips, gratuities, cover and service charges.

Paul Scully:

On 2 October 2018, the Government announced it would bring forward legislation ensuring tips left for workers go to them in full. We think tips earned by workers should go to the workers they were intended for, and we remain committed to legislating on this.

■ Hydrogen

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[185265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of how much of the Government's hydrogen production targets of (a) 1GW by 2025 and (b) 5GW by 2030 will be met by green hydrogen.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan confirmed our aim, working with industry, for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy. As we progress towards this ambition, we would hope to see around 1GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2025.

The levels of green and blue hydrogen production that make up the 5GW will depend on market developments in the 2020s.

Further details will be set out in the forthcoming UK Hydrogen strategy which will be published this year.

■ Hydrogen: Carbon Emissions**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[185264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the level of carbon emissions produced via the production of (a) green hydrogen and (b) blue hydrogen.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The greenhouse gas emissions associated with different hydrogen production methods depend on a wide range of factors such as the feedstock energy, the efficiency of the hydrogen production plant and the CO₂ capture rate for carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS) enabled blue hydrogen production.

BEIS is working with industry, academia and regulators on understanding and comparing options for an emissions standard that will define low carbon hydrogen. As part of this work, we have been assessing emissions associated with a range of hydrogen production methods, including CCUS enabled blue hydrogen and electrolytic green hydrogen.

We will be releasing further detail on this work in the coming months and intend to consult on a UK Low Carbon Hydrogen Standard alongside the UK Hydrogen Strategy.

■ Hydrogen: Finance**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[185266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on financial support for (a) green hydrogen and (b) blue hydrogen projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I meet with my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer regularly to discuss all aspects of my portfolio.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan confirmed our aim, working with industry, for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy.

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

This ambition will be supported by a range of measures, including a £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund and our hydrogen business models and a revenue mechanism to bring through private sector investment.

We will be consulting shortly on these measures, alongside the publication of the UK's first ever Hydrogen Strategy.

■ Local Growth Deals: Hartlepool

Steve Reed:

[185382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) jobs created and (b) homes built in Hartlepool as a result of Local Growth Deals for the Tees Valley Unlimited Local Enterprise Partnership.

Paul Scully:

As required by Government, Tees Valley Combined Authority publish an annual report on the progress towards delivering growth deal targets. The latest report is available here: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Tees-Valley-Combined-Authority-Delivery-Report-2019-20.pdf>

That report highlights the following targets and progress across the Tees Valley:

KEY PERFORMANCE

INDICATOR	DELIVERED TO DATE	FORECAST 2021 – 2025	TOTAL FORECAST
Jobs created	527	11,943	12,470
Apprenticeships created	646	420	1,066
Learners assisted	9,710	8,392	18,102
Houses completed	1,078	2,910	3,988

Detailed output figures are not available for Hartlepool.

Steve Reed:

[185383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much investment from local growth deals for the Tees Valley Unlimited Local Enterprise Partnership was made on projects in Hartlepool.

Paul Scully:

Tees Valley Combined Authority was allocated £126million through local growth deals. As an integrated Local Enterprise Partnership and Combined Authority this formed part of a 'single pot' joining 24 different government funds in order to maximise programme flexibility and investment.

This overall programme of activity is detailed in Tees Valley Investment Plan 2019-2029, which is available at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Investment-Plan-2019-20-Digital.pdf>

Much of this investment is for schemes benefitting all of the Tees Valley. A full list of supported projects is available at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/investment/projects/>, including support for the Hartlepool Waterfront, as well as business incubation spaces, and new training facilities in the town.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper: [182026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on weddings dated 26 February 2021, reference ZA55766.

Paul Scully:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth wrote to you on 20 April about support for the wedding industry.

■ **OneWeb: Finance**

Nick Smith: [184413]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2021 to Question 152466 on OneWeb, how much the Government has allocated for future funding to OneWeb in the next (a) 12 and (b) 36 months; and which additional shareholders are being considered.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government do not propose to invest further in OneWeb. The Government, together with other OneWeb shareholders, is engaged in discussions with a range of potential partners about future funding and bringing in additional shareholders. For reasons of commercial sensitivity, the Government cannot provide details of potential investors before they are formally announced.

■ **Re-employment**

Navendu Mishra: [182105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March 2021 to Question 164672, on Re-employment, how many (a) employer and (b) employee groups Acas spoke to, by business sector.

Paul Scully:

Input was received from a balanced range of participants from 15 organisations, covering employer and employee groups and other professional bodies. Individually and collectively these covered a very wide range of business sectors.

■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[185367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including coach companies as non-essential retail to ensure they can access financial support during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

I am answering the question under the assumption that it refers to the designation of businesses for the purpose of eligibility for Restart Grants.

The primary principle of the Restart Grant scheme is to support businesses that offer in-person services, where the main service and activity takes place in a fixed rate-paying premises, in the relevant sectors.

Coach Tour Operators are not eligible for the Restart Grant Scheme but maybe able to access discretionary support through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). Local Authorities are free to provide ARG support that suits their local area and guidance for ARG makes clear that Local Authorities are able to issue ARG grants to tour operator businesses. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced at the Budget that an additional £425m will be made available via ARG meaning that more than £2bn has been allocated to Local Authorities since November 2020.

■ Transport: Hydrogen

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[185267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the role of green hydrogen in decarbonising transport between 2021 and 2024.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy meets with my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport regularly to discuss all aspects of transport decarbonisation including the role for green hydrogen.

Officials from both departments work together bilaterally and through formal governance.

A good example of cross departmental working is the announcement of £3 million to support the development of the UK's first Hydrogen Transport Hub in Tees Valley.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Civil Service Sports Council: Rosyth**

Douglas Chapman: [\[171634\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a Suitability and Sustainability Study will be undertaken following the closure of the Civil Service Club in Rosyth, Fife.

Julia Lopez:

Decisions on the Civil Service Club in Rosyth, Fife have been made by the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC). The Cabinet Office has no current plans to conduct a study as described.

■ **Government Departments: Procurement**

Zarah Sultana: [\[184559\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what measures are in place to ensure transparency in the procurement of Government services and contracts.

Julia Lopez:

Central Government buyers must publish all tender documents and contracts with a contract value of over £10,000 on Contracts Finder. Updated guidance on transparency and the publication of tender and contract documents was published in 2017, Procurement Policy Note 02/17: Promoting Greater Transparency.

We are also taking steps to improve the processes already in place by proposing specific measures to strengthen transparency through the commercial lifecycle as set out in our [Green Paper](#).

Debbie Abrahams: [\[185363\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information he holds on the use of Project Bank Accounts by (a) Government departments, (b) Government agencies and (c) non-departmental bodies.

Debbie Abrahams: [\[185364\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what data his Department holds on the total value of Government works using a Project Bank Account.

Debbie Abrahams: [\[185365\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to increase the use of Project Bank Accounts by (a) Government departments, (b) Government agencies and (c) non-departmental bodies.

Julia Lopez:

This Department does not hold specific information on the use of Project Bank Accounts. However, as the PBA policy lead we do engage with departments and their ALBs about their PBA usage, including indicative spend.

Whilst the use of PBAs was being established we collected data on the value of government contracts making use of PBAs. During that period (2011-2015) over £10 billion was spent on a wide range of construction projects using PBAs.

PBAs are the preferred option by government when it is cost effective and efficient, and departments have made a commitment to use PBAs unless there are compelling reasons not to. This has been restated in the Construction Playbook (December 2020), which sets out key policies and guidance for government departments and their arms length bodies on how public works projects and programmes are assessed, procured and delivered. PBAs are just one way the government supports fair payment as part of the Government's Prompt Payment Code.

■ Prime Minister: Disclosure of Information**Layla Moran:**[\[183272\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 180587 on Prime Minister: Disclosure of Information, how many discussions he has had with leaders of other nations where a readout has (a) been and (b) not been provided to the media following the event.

Penny Mordaunt:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, Prime Ministers will speak to their international counterparts on a range of issues. There will be occasions where it is in the national interest that such discussions are confidential.

■ Public Sector: Procurement**Rachel Reeves:**[\[185349\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much and what proportion of the Government's £290 billion annual public sector procurement expenditure has been spent with or on (a) the private sector, (b) the voluntary sector, (c) SMEs, (d) public sector bodies, (e) goods and (f) services in each of the last five financial years.

Rachel Reeves:[\[185350\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much and what proportion of the Government's £290 billion annual public sector procurement expenditure has been spent in each region of the UK in each of the last five financial years.

Rachel Reeves:[\[185351\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much and what proportion of the Government's £290 billion annual public sector

procurement expenditure has been disbursed by each (a) Government department, (b) local authority, (c) university, (d) research institute or research council, (e) NHS Trust and (f) further education institute in each of the last five financial years.

Rachel Reeves:

[\[185352\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much and what proportion of the Government's £290 billion annual public sector procurement expenditure has been spent on (a) goods made in the UK, (b) services provided by UK-owned companies, (c) goods made outside of the UK and (d) services provided by overseas-owned companies in each of the last five financial years.

Rachel Reeves:

[\[185353\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much and what proportion of the Government's £290 billion annual public sector procurement expenditure has been spent (a) with businesses that use or have used child labour and (b) on products manufactured in, or using materials manufactured in, Xinjiang in each of the last five financial years.

Julia Lopez:

This information is not held centrally.

The UK spends some £290 billion on public procurement every year. This huge amount of government spending must be leveraged to play its part in the UK's economic recovery, opening up public contracts to more small businesses and social enterprises to innovate in public service delivery, and meeting our net-zero carbon target by 2050. The Government has already reviewed the Green Book to ensure it supports "levelling up" and is taking other steps for example through the National Infrastructure Strategy to ensure vibrant and resilient supply chains. Our ambitious plans for reform, set out in our recently published Green Paper on transforming procurement, aim to create a simpler regime that reduces costs for business and the public sector alike whilst complying with our international obligations.

The Government is committed to working to improve action to tackle modern slavery in supply chains, and has published commercial policy and guidance which advocates a systematic approach to identifying and tackling modern slavery and labour abuses in government supply chains, focussing on areas of the highest risk. We are keeping this matter under close review.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Death

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[183097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether there is a backlog of requests for records of deceased service personnel.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[185318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to expedite requests for records of deceased service personnel during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[185319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the number of outstanding requests for records of deceased service personnel.

Leo Docherty:

Across all three Services of the Armed Forces there is currently approximately a six month backlog of requests for Service records of deceased personnel. The administration work associated with officials providing these records, which are primarily in hardcopy, can only be undertaken if physically present in the office. This has been impacted by reduced staffing levels because of Government Covid-19 restrictions requiring social distancing, local Tier restrictions, and staff shielding. Additionally, there has been an increase in applications received during the lockdown periods in the last 12 months, which has further contributed to a backlog forming. It is anticipated that as soon as restrictions are lifted, in line with the Government's roadmap out of lockdown, the backlog should start to reduce.

■ **Armed Forces: Families**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[184491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what additional support has been offered to the families of members of the armed forces during the covid-19 outbreak.

Leo Docherty:

Service families are an integral part of the Armed Forces community, and Ministers and senior officials have communicated directly with them to provide updates on the support available, and to offer personal thanks for their continued commitment to the Armed Forces.

Financial support has been provided through additional flexibility on allowances and entitlements, for example, for Service Family Accommodation. Costs incurred for COVID-19 testing can also be reclaimed. Safeguarding guidance and safety planning for those facing domestic abuse has been issued, and mental wellbeing support provided through the launch of the online tool HeadFIT. In addition, the Partner Career Support Programme has been launched and the application period extended until March 2021, in recognition of the impact of the pandemic.

Specific guidance has been issued by the Department internally and externally, working alongside the Armed Forces Families Federations, information hubs such as HIVES, and the British Forces Broadcasting Service. Organisations such as X-Forces Enterprise, Milspo Business Network, RBLI Lifeworks and Military Coworking Network have also provided support and signposting.

■ Armed Forces: Suicide**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[181210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many active-duty military deaths there have been by suicide from 1990 to date.

Leo Docherty:

Between 1990 and 2020 (latest data available), there have been 683 coroner confirmed suicides in the regular Armed Forces, the annual numbers have been presented in the Table.

Table: UK regular Armed Forces suicide and open verdict deaths by year, numbers

1990-2020**Year All Coroner confirmed suicides****All 683****1990 50****1991 48****1992 37****1993 43****1994 34****1995 43****1996 32****1997 26****1998 19****1999 30****2000 37****2001 16****2002 15****2003 25****2004 20****2005 22****2006 12****2007 10****2008 10****2009 15****2010 7**

2011 15

2012 20

2013 9

2014 10

2015 8

2016 13

2017 16

2018 17

2019 15

2020 9

Source: Defence Statistics Health

1 Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment. Figures include male and female personnel.

The latest statistics have been published on gov.uk at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-suicide-and-open-verdict-deaths-index>

■ Army: Scotland

Dave Doogan:

[184545]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of paid Colonels in the British Army are stationed in Scotland.

James Heappey:

Regular Trade Trained Strength of Paid Rank of Colonel stationed in Scotland as at 1 January 2021

	1 JANUARY 2021
Number of Colonels in the British Army stationed in Scotland	9
Proportion of Colonels in the British Army stationed in Scotland	1.7%

Source: Analysis (Army)

Notes/Caveats:

1. The figures are for the Trade Trained Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, Army Reserve and all other Reserves, but includes those personnel that have transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP.

■ Challenger Tanks: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Kevan Jones:

[184374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will publish a breakdown of the Challenger 2 Life Enhancement Programme by (a) ammunition, (b) training and (c) infrastructure costs; and what the total cost was of that programme.

Jeremy Quin:

As announced in the Integrated Review, the Ministry of Defence will invest £1.3 billion in armoured capability by upgrading 148 main battle tanks. To date, £73.3 million has been spent on the programme (£7.4 million on Concept and £65.9 million on Assessment). The programme is currently at the beginning of the Demonstration phase and no Training, Ammunition or Infrastructure costs have yet been incurred.

■ David Cameron

Mr Kevan Jones:

[184373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Ministers or officials from his Department have met with David Cameron in the last two years.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence publishes in arrears details of Ministers' and Senior Officials' meetings on a quarterly basis on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-ministry-of-defence>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-staff-meetings-with-external-organisations>.

■ Military Decorations: Ethnic Groups

James Daly:

[184580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel from a BAME background have been nominated for a military honour which was not awarded in the last 10 years; and what representations his Department has received on posthumously awarding Walter Daniel Tull a military honour in recognition of his service in World War One.

Leo Docherty:

Nominations for military honours which are subsequently unsuccessful are not retained by the Government.

The Government has received many representations requesting that Lieutenant Walter Tull be awarded an honour in recognition of his bravery. Although his actions were no doubt courageous, it is a longstanding principle of our national honours and awards system not to make retrospective awards. This policy dates back to an Army

Order of 1919 that stated that no further awards would be given for services in First World War. This principle remains in force today.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Greensill**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[184372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Ministers or officials in his Department have had contact with Greensill Capital in the last two years.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence publishes in arrears details of Ministers' and Senior Officials' meetings on a quarterly basis on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-ministry-of-defence>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-staff-meetings-with-external-organisations>.

■ **Navy**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[184371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the capacity of the Maritime Capability Trials and Assessment Team.

Jeremy Quin:

The number of trials demanded of Maritime Capability Trials and Assessment (MCTA) has been broadly similar over the last three years and MCTA has fulfilled this requirement.

MCTA has 146 posts (Royal Navy personnel and civil servants), which has been sufficient to meet the requirement. However, MCTA is constantly matching capacity, efficiency improvements and new techniques (including digital improvements) with the demands of the equipment programme and Fleet Operational Schedule. As with the rest of Navy Command's structures, MCTA is currently under review to ensure sufficient capacity to meet future requirements.

■ **Navy: Radiation Exposure**

Deidre Brock:

[185923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 6 December 2018 to Question 197642, how many submariners have received radiation doses in excess of safe limits in each of the last 10 years.

Leo Docherty:

No submariners have received radiation doses in excess of safe limits in any of the last ten years.

■ Nuclear Weapons**Deidre Brock:** [\[185924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department made on meeting the target in the Strategic Defence and Security Review, published in 2010, to reduce the UK's nuclear warhead stockpile ceiling from not more than 225 to not more than 180 by the mid 2020s.

Jeremy Quin:

As announced in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, published on 16 March 2021, the UK will move to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 warheads. I am withholding further details on the size of the stockpile for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

■ Oman: Official Hospitality**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[184555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason the Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter did not register the hospitality he received at the Sultan's Privy Council in Oman on 5-6 January 2019.

Leo Docherty:

The hospitality the Chief of Defence Staff received at the Sultan's Privy Council in Oman on 5-6 January 2019 is registered. Transparency guidance for Senior Officials from the Cabinet Office states that Hospitality provided by overseas governments should not normally be included in published returns.

■ Veterans: Coronavirus**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[184490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans are in place to ensure that in-person veteran support services are able to reopen as soon as possible during the covid-19 outbreak.

Leo Docherty:

As lockdown restrictions ease, Veterans UK will be able to undertake more face to face work, in line with appropriate guidance to ensure the safety of all involved. Veterans UK continue to review the position and any changes in service delivery will be implemented as soon as is practically possible. Details will be publicised on the Veterans UK web pages on GOV.UK.

Face to face contact with clients is not always the default position for assisting or managing casework. Requirements are assessed at the initial point of client contact and the most appropriate method of assisting is agreed with clients and implemented. This will continue to be the delivery model going forward.

■ Veterans: Radiation Exposure

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[184479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to correspondence (ref D/Min(Lords)/AGMC2021/01429e) between the Rt Hon Baroness Goldie DL and the hon Member for Salford and Eccles, what research studies have been reviewed by or on behalf of his Department demonstrating that the health and well-being of British Nuclear Test Programme 1952 -1991 Veterans is comparable with the age and sex matched population of both their Service peers and the general community.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[184480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the results will be published of the fourth follow up study carried out by the National Radiological Protection Board (Public Health England) considering overall mortality and cancer incidence in Nuclear Testing Veterans, comparing veterans present at the tests with a control group of age matched veterans serving at the same time but who were not nuclear test veterans, and with the UK general population.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[184481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the potential effects of the British Nuclear Test Programme 1952 - 1991, what assessment (a) his Department has and (b) other Government Departments have made of internationally published peer-reviewed evidence on increased rates of congenital defects in children born to parents at risk of exposure to ionising radiation.

Leo Docherty:

The position of this, and previous Governments, is that there is no published peer-reviewed evidence of excess illness or mortality among Nuclear Test Veterans (NTVs) as a group that could be linked to participation in the tests or to exposure to radiation as a result of that participation. Formal and well-documented procedures were in place to ensure the health and safety of those participating in the testing programme.

In response to health concerns of some NTVs in the 1980s, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) commissioned epidemiological studies into the mortality and cancer incidence among nuclear test participants. These were conducted by the independent National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), now part of Public Health England (PHE). Three analyses were carried out, of which the latest report published in 2003 concluded that overall levels of mortality and cancer incidence in NTVs have continued to be similar to those in a matched Service control group and lower than in the general population. That report is available from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mortality-and-cancer-incidence-1952-1998-uk-nuclear-weapons-tests>

To provide further reassurance, the MOD commissioned a fourth study in the NRPB series in order to bring the evidence completely up to date. The study was carried out by PHE and commenced in December 2018. The study will extend the analysis by a

further almost 20 years, again considering overall mortality and cancer incidence and mortality, and comparing veterans present at the tests with a control group of age matched veterans serving at the same time, but who were not NTVs, and with the UK general population. The Department's understanding is that the study has been completed and the researchers are preparing a paper for submission to a mainstream scientific/medical journal. This will then be peer reviewed. Further details about the study are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-weapons-test-participants-study/plan-for-the-fourth-analysis-of-the-nuclear-weapons-test-participants-study>

Analysis of the international published peer-reviewed evidence to date provides no support for increased rates of congenital defects in children born to parents at risk of exposure to ionising radiation.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Coronavirus: Festivals and Special Occasions

Andrew Rosindell:

[178889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, what discussions officials in his Department have had with their Dutch counterparts on the effect of large outdoor events on the spread of covid-19 following the Back to Life pilot festival in Biddinghuizen, the Netherlands in March 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Events Research Programme (ERP) is exploring ways to enable people to attend large events and performances safely. DCMS officials regularly review reports on mass gatherings published by the Cabinet Office's International Comparators Joint Unit (ICJU), including activities taking place in the Netherlands. Officials academics and programme team members behind the Back to Life event to discuss their approach and lessons learned from the pilot. The ERP continues to monitor relevant international events for comparison and knowledge sharing.

■ Cricket: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel:

[181422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allowing pilot events to enable a limited number of people to watch cricket matches.

Nigel Huddleston:

We want the British public to be able to get back to doing the things they love safely - including going to sports events. But we recognise the challenges that events face to operate in a way that ensures the risk of transmission is sufficiently low while maintaining commercial viability.

Public safety is our main priority and decisions will be made working with local Directors for Public Health for all pilot events included in the Events Research Programme. The pilots will be run across a range of settings, venues, and activities so that findings will support the full reopening of similar settings across multiple sectors. However the point of the Events Research Programme is not to enable people to watch sport, but to gather evidence.

We will ensure that interim results gathered from Events Research Programmes are fed into policy development swiftly to avoid missing reopening opportunities because of insufficient data. The ERP will align its work with other reviews, including covid status certification and social distancing, to ensure the latest research findings are taken into account.

Under the government's roadmap out of lockdown, cricket grounds will be able to admit fans from Step 3, and not before 17th May.

■ **Cricket: Government Assistance**

James Daly:

[\[184576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what Government support is available for the provision of facilities and to encourage participation in grass roots cricket.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sport and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus.

Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support, which many sport clubs have benefited from. Sport England has also provided £270 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic. This includes £6,599,437 investment in cricket to 1,362 projects.

On 26 January Sport England also published their strategy 'Uniting the Movement' and as part of this have committed an extra £50million to help grassroots sports clubs and organisations affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Furthermore, in the last 10 years (since 2011), Sport England has invested more than £85 million of National Lottery and Exchequer funding in community sports organisations and facilities for participation in cricket. For the period 2017/22 Sport England has invested £11,202,500 in the England and Wales Cricket Board.

■ **Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press Inquiry**

Gavin Robinson:

[\[184471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to implement the recommendations from Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government has made clear that it does not intend to proceed with Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry. This decision was reached following a public consultation and having taken into account all of the views and evidence submitted. Reopening the inquiry is no longer appropriate, proportionate, or in the public interest. This position was reiterated in the 2019 Conservative manifesto.

The media landscape has changed significantly since the Leveson Inquiry. Today, our press is facing new and critical challenges that threaten its livelihood and sustainability.

The Inquiry and subsequent police investigations were comprehensive. More than 300 people gave evidence to the Inquiry, and over 40 people were convicted during the three major investigations. There have been extensive reforms to policing practices as well as significant changes to press self-regulation.

There now exists a strengthened, independent, self-regulatory system for the press. The majority of traditional publishers—including 95% of national newspapers by circulation—are members of IPSO. A number of smaller publishers have joined IMPRESS.

■ Discover England Fund**Tulip Siddiq:****[181361]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Discover England Fund on the competitiveness of the booking management software industry.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department and VisitEngland regularly assess the impact of Government funding for tourism product development in England on various aspects of the industry.

One of the core objectives of VisitEngland's £45.5m Discover England Fund (DEF) was to ensure products were bookable online and therefore easier to access in domestic and international markets. With the number of online-bookable products in England increasing through DEF, there has been greater appreciation for the value in using a booking system to distribute and sell tourism products.

Tourism Exchange GB (TXGB) is the online digital platform created in partnership with VisitBritain/VisitEngland to help suppliers across the UK reach more consumers.

TXGB actively encourages any booking system to integrate itself within the platform, providing them with the opportunity to access new products. There are currently 83 booking systems integrated to TXGB and a pipeline of further activity to increase this number.

■ Food: Advertising

Bob Blackman: [\[180956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps have been taken to protect businesses and jobs in the food and drink manufacturing industry on the high street from the effect of advertising restrictions on products that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Bob Blackman: [\[180958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to support high street food and drink businesses and takeaways after the implementation of the proposed online ban on advertising food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt.

Bob Blackman: [\[180960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking protect (a) small and medium sized businesses and (b) franchisees from the potential effect of proposed advertising restrictions on products that are high in fat, sugar and salt on their businesses.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Prime Minister has made it clear that tackling obesity is a priority for this Government. In July 2020 the Government outlined its Tackling Obesity strategy which details a host of measures aimed at improving the chances of citizens living a healthy lifestyle.

The Government proposed various options for restricting HFSS advertising in the 2019 and 2020 consultations targeted at protecting children from being exposed to advertising of unhealthy food products. Balanced against the priority of protecting children and tackling obesity, we have carefully considered the impact that any restrictions will have on industry and in particular the potential for market distortion or disproportionate effects on key business sectors.

The final policy will be set out in our consultation response due to be published shortly. The Government is committed to acting collaboratively to prepare businesses, individuals and organisations for changes to the rules around HFSS advertising.

■ Football

Clive Efford: [\[184354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on how many occasions Ministers and officials from his Department met with the Football Supporters Association to discuss a fan led review of the future of football governance since December 2019.

Nigel Huddleston:

Ministers and officials have met with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the scope and structure of the football governance review, including the Football

Supporters' Association on multiple occasions. The Secretary of State and Prime Minister met with the Football Supporters' Association last week to discuss the fan-led review of football governance.

A full list of Ministerial meetings can be found on gov.uk.

Robert Halfon:

[184421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed European Super League on grassroots football.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has been vocal in its opposition to these proposals, which are not in the interests of the game, and I was glad to see the withdrawal of all English teams from the project.

This is the right result for football fans, clubs and communities across the country.

■ Football Index and Footstock

Alex Sobel:

[183277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to establish an independent investigation into the collapse of (a) Football Index and (b) Footstock.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government is taking the collapse of BetIndex Ltd (the operators of Football Index) and the concerns of those affected very seriously. On 20 April we announced an independent review of the regulation of the Football Index product. The review will take an objective look at the decisions and actions of the Gambling Commission and any other relevant regulators, to provide a clear account of how the company's activities were regulated, identify if there are potential areas for improvement and inform our Review of the Gambling Act 2005. More information can be found in a Written Ministerial Statement on Regulation of Football Index, available at:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-04-20/hcws929>

While we appreciate that the situation regarding Footstock has also affected some British customers, it would not be straightforward to include the regulation of both companies in the scope of an independent review. As significantly more customers in Britain were affected by its collapse, the review will focus on Football Index. We hope the insights from the investigation will inform how novel products are regulated in future.

■ Football: Females

Dan Jarvis:

[\[185368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2021 to Question 163699 on Football: Females, what discussions he has had with representatives of Sport England on rearranging the FA FIVES tournament that was cancelled in 2020 as a result of the covid-19 public health restrictions.

Nigel Huddleston:

I have had a number of conversations with Sport England, The FA, and numerous other stakeholders about the rescheduling of the UEFA EURO 2020 Championships, and associated events such as the FA FIVES, since their postponement due to the covid pandemic last year. The scheduling of the FA FIVES is a matter for The FA with the support of Sport England, however, we are confident of staging a successful men's EURO 2020 Championships this year, and a successful women's EURO 2022 Championships next year.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[185369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions his Department has had with Ministerial colleagues of the Department for Education on plans to provide support to help increase participation in girl's football in primary schools.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are crucial for our mental and physical health. The Chief Medical Officer is clear that being physically active is important to long-term health and crucial for keeping people healthy. That's why we have continued to make sure that people can exercise throughout the national restrictions, and why we have ensured that grassroots and children's sport was at the front of the queue when easing those restrictions.

My department works closely with the Department for Education on school sport provision. Schools are free to organise and deliver a flexible, diverse and challenging Physical Education curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils, which can include football for girls.

The Secretary of State for Education and the Culture Secretary jointly hosted a school sport roundtable in March where the English FA were represented. This roundtable launched our ongoing work to bring together a sports sector offer to support schools through an active summer recovery term, and on into the summer holidays, in order to get children and young people active again.

Minister Gibb and I also recently met with Baroness Sue Campbell, Director of Women's Football at the FA, to discuss PE and school sport including the work that Baroness Campbell is doing to increase the numbers of girls playing football in schools.

■ Football: Harlow**Robert Halfon:** [184420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support grassroots football in Harlow.

Robert Halfon: [184422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to increase investment into grassroots football.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to supporting grassroots sport and I welcomed its return on the 29th March.

During the pandemic, Sport England has provided £220m directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic, via a range of funds including their £35m Community Emergency Fund. This support is available to both men's and women's clubs with the latest figures showing £10.5m has already been awarded to over 1,500 football clubs.

Sport England has provided funding to The Football Foundation which has run various funds to help grassroots clubs prepare for the return of football and re-open their facilities once safe to do so. This has included the Club and Pitch Preparation Funds and Matchday Support Fund.

The Government also has an established partnership with the Football Association and the Premier League focused on investment into community facilities, the Government contributing £18m each year. The three-way partnership sees a combined £70m go to new facilities delivered by the Football Foundation each year. Sport England and The FA have worked with the Foundation to produce a local football facility plan for every local authority in the country, mapping out the local investment needs. These can be found at <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/local-plans>.

Alongside this annual investment, the Government announced at Budget 21 an additional £25m of funding for community sport facilities across the UK.

The Government will continue to support grassroots sport in our local communities.

■ Internet: Disinformation**Sir Mark Hendrick:** [185286]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle conspiracy groups that share misinformation online.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government takes the issue of disinformation very seriously and DCMS is leading work across Government to tackle it. In response to the harmful disinformation and misinformation relating to Covid-19 we stood up the Cross-

Whitehall Counter Disinformation Unit on 5 March 2020, which brings together cross-Government monitoring and analysis capabilities.

We are working closely with social media platforms to help them to quickly identify and respond to potentially harmful content on their platforms, including unfounded conspiracy theories, in line with their terms and conditions.

We are also working with industry to support the introduction of systems and processes that promote authoritative sources of information. We have seen positive steps taken by social media platforms to curtail the spread of harmful and misleading narratives. Platforms have updated their terms of service and made technical changes to their products, including the addition of labels and warning messages which provide additional context and information on content containing disputed or misleading information related to Covid-19. We welcome those moves, but more action is needed to further limit the spread of misinformation on their platforms - particularly where this could result in real-world harm.

■ **Music: Exports**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[182004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the development of a music export office.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is committed to supporting our world-leading creative industries and to help them to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are working urgently across government and with the industry, including through the DCMS-led working group, on plans to support the creative sectors to work and tour in Europe and further afield. This includes looking carefully, in partnership with the Department for International Trade, at proposals for a new Cultural Export Office that could provide practical help and advice. We will provide further information in due course

■ **National Leisure Recovery Fund**

Alison McGovern:

[\[185358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174112, what data his Department holds on the effect of the National Leisure Recovery Fund on the rate of leisure centre closures since that funding was announced.

Nigel Huddleston:

The National Leisure Recovery Fund sought to support eligible public sector leisure centres to reopen to the public, giving the sport and physical activity sector the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term. It was delivered in conjunction with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Sport England.

A total of £100 million was available as a biddable fund to eligible local authorities in England, which was allocated in a single funding round. Eligible local authorities include: those in England who hold responsibility for the provision of leisure services, those who have outsourced their leisure provision to an external body to and those whose outsourced leisure arrangements have ended since 20 March 2020 and services are now delivered as an in-house function. This is in addition to the wider financial support provided to councils throughout the pandemic.

As part of the National Leisure Recovery Fund, the government has set up a data capture system to show how the fund has supported the reopening of these vital community assets and the impact on the rate of participation across Local Authorities. Early information will be available at the end of the month and will help to inform future government policy in this space.

■ Rugby: Injuries

Jim Shannon:

[\[185360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has had discussions with US company Neuroflex, who are creating a virtual reality headset to determine pitch-side whether rugby players have suffered a brain injury; and if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make use of that technology mandatory at matches to support faster diagnosis of brain injury.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department has had no such discussions with Neuroflex.

The safety, wellbeing and welfare of everyone taking part in sport is absolutely paramount. National Governing Bodies are responsible for the regulation of their sports and for ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect participants from harm, including serious injuries. With that in mind, we expect sports to do all they can to protect their players as a fundamental part of their duty of care.

To that end, the Secretary of State and I hosted two roundtables on concussion in sport recently to understand the issues from the perspectives of players and to push the sports on what more they can be doing. The Government remains committed to working with sports to build on the positive work that is already taking place, including the use of technology.

■ Spacehive: Grants

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[181202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether Spacehive has a role in allocating grants to community projects from the (a) Arts Council and (b) other organisations funded from the public purse.

Caroline Dineneage:

Spacehive does not have a role in allocating grants from the Arts Council but has played a role in previous project funding.

During 2019-20 Arts Council England (ACE) ran a pilot project, Our Music Crowd, to help Music Education Hubs develop their crowdfunding skills. Spacehive, an online platform enabling organisations to crowdfund, was procured as a one-off supplier for this initiative and acted as a conduit for funding. It did not have a role in choosing which projects were funded or successful. Funding was provided to the projects using the Spacehive platform.

Spacehive has also worked with community networks, Local Authorities, foundations and companies in a similar fashion. I am unable to comment on any relationship Spacehive may have had with other Government Departments.

■ Sports: Disability

Justin Madders:

[182064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of (a) support and (b) opportunities for disabled children in gymnastics.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring support and opportunities for sport, including gymnastics, are available disabled people. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase levels of physical activity amongst under-represented groups, working closely with the sector to achieve this.

DCMS welcomes the recent formation of the [British Gymnastics Disability Gymnastics Panel](#) which aims to provide more opportunities for disabled participants, with the group seeking to influence, shape and drive inclusive opportunities in gymnastics.

Sport England, DCMS's arm's length body for grassroots sport in England, recently launched their new ten year strategy, 'Uniting the Movement'. The strategy reinforces their commitment to tackle inequalities in sport and physical activity, and provide opportunities to people that have traditionally been left behind, including disabled people. Sport England's Active Lives Children surveys provide information on activity levels across a variety of sports, including gymnastics, and include data on participation by children with disabilities. The latest reports can be found [here](#).

■ Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[183210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support he is providing to venues hoping to run pilot sporting events with spectators in attendance as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Events Research Programme (ERP), working closely with local authorities and organisers, will undertake studies to get fans and audiences back safely as restrictions are gradually eased. The pilot programme will be used to provide key scientific data and research into how small and large-scale events could be permitted

to safely reopen in line with the Roadmap out of lockdown as part of Step 4, commencing no earlier than 21 June. The pilots will be run across a range of settings, venue types, and activity types so that findings could support the full reopening of similar settings across multiple sectors.

The ERP delivery team is working closely with the event operators, local Directors of Public Health, local authorities and police to ensure each pilot is conducted safely. All events will be supported by highly capable safety teams and have the full support and buy-in from the relevant local authorities, police and Directors for Public Health

In terms of financial support on 19 November 2020 the Government announced a rescue package worth £300 million to help major spectator sports which have been affected by the pandemic, In the recent budget a further £300m was announced for the recovery package across all sports. The Culture Recovery Fund and Sports Recovery packages have provided close to £2.5 billion in sector specific support to date. On 26 January Sport England also published their strategy 'Uniting the Movement' and as part of this have committed an extra £50million to help grassroots sports clubs and organisations affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

■ **Tourism: Worcestershire**

Sajid Javid:

[182036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of tourism to (a) Worcestershire and (b) Bromsgrove District once covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department is taking a number of steps to encourage tourism once restrictions are eased, including in Worcestershire.

The Global Travel Taskforce last year committed the Government to publish a Tourism Recovery Plan in support of the sector. The Government intends to set out proposals in the Spring, including plans for a marketing campaign to welcome visitors back to the UK as soon as it is safe to do so.

We are working with VisitBritain, VisitEngland and local partners to champion the UK's diverse tourism offer through the Escape the Everyday campaign.

We will continue to work with industry to provide assurance regarding when people can safely visit attractions - as demonstrated through the We're Good to Go industry standard, which has been used by over 45,000 businesses.

The March Budget included £700m of extra funding to support our world-leading arts, culture and sporting institutions - protecting the venues which make the UK an attractive destination to visit.

Across all rounds and competitions of the Culture Recovery Fund, the West Midlands region received around £110m in funding, through awards to over 450 organisations/sites. As examples of funding in Mid-Worcestershire, Hartlebury Castle

Preservation Trust received £290,000 across both rounds of funding, and The Mono Box received £107,318 across both rounds of funding.

As some examples of funding in Bromsgrove, Avoncroft Museum received £275,943 across both rounds of funding, and Blackwell Adventure received £55,000 in Round 2.

In total, over £25bn has been provided to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors in the form of grants, loans and tax breaks.

■ Voluntary Work: Young People

Cat Smith:

[\[184499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many young people have (a) commenced and (b) graduated from a National Citizenship Service (NCS) programme in (a) 2018-19 and (b) 2019-20; and what the Government's target for participation in the NCS was in each of those years.

Matt Warman:

As per National Citizen Service Trust's 2018/19 Annual Report, 99,674 young people took part in the NCS programme in the 2018 calendar year (England only) with a completion rate of 93%. This compares to a target of 100,000 young people for the calendar year 2018.

In the 2019 calendar year, 92,041 young people took part in the NCS programme. This figure includes 552 young people who participated in the Spring 2019 cohort but were excluded from NCST's 2019/20 Annual Report (which covers the April 2019 to March 2020 financial year). The target for 2019/20 was set for the financial, rather than calendar year and was for at least 100,000 young people to take part in NCS.

The completion rate for 2019 was 88% for the calendar year. Two key factors contributed to this lower participation rate in comparison to 2018:

- Significant underperformance of one of the largest providers of NCS at the time - they exited the network at the end of 2019.
- A tightening of criteria around what constitutes a "graduate" from the NCS programmes on the back of process reviews and systems changes that took effect from Spring 2019.

Cat Smith:

[\[185406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 180550, if he will review the Answer to that question in the context of the NCST Annual Report 2019-20's statement that the total number of core participants in financial year 2019-20 was 91,489.

Matt Warman:

The total number of core National Citizen Service participants across the Spring, Summer and Autumn programmes in 2019 was 92,041. The figure of 91,489 participants referred to in the National Citizen Service Trust's Annual Report 2019/20

is on a financial year basis and thus covers the Summer and Autumn programmes only, excluding 552 participants in the Spring 2019 programme.

The participation numbers were reported on a calendar year basis in the 2018/19 Annual Report but reporting practices changed when the NCS became a Royal Charter Body in December 2019. Accordingly, participation KPIs for the 2019/20 Annual Report were reported on a financial year basis.

■ Wembley Stadium: Coronavirus

Gareth Thomas:

[\[181181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is planning to take to prevent the potential for fraudulent negative covid-19 test results being used by travelling football fans seeking to gain access to the Carabao cup final; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

All attendees will be asked to provide consent to enter the research programme, prior to being invited to attend the event. The consent will be specific to each event.

Our Science Board has agreed that testing will be required to take place both before and after the event in order to ensure event safety and to gather evidence on the pilots.

Attendees will take a LFD test at an assisted testing site within 24 hours before an event, as well as an at-home PCR test before the event which will be posted to attendees.

Participants will receive a text or email address from NHS Test and Trace which they will need to present to stewards upon entry to the stadium footprint. A negative test, taken within the timeframe specified, is required for entry. Results will be validated by the event organisers before ticket-holders are admitted to the venue.

Details of testing requirements [have been published](#) and are included in the initial consent document, to ensure those invited to attend ERP pilots are informed of testing procedures.

The ERP delivery team is working closely with the event operators, local Directors of Public Health, local authorities and police to ensure each pilot is conducted safely.

All events will be supported by highly capable safety teams and have the full support and buy-in from the relevant local authorities, police and Directors for Public Health.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Nick Fletcher:

[\[914750\]](#)

What recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of educating children on financial responsibility.

Nick Gibb:

Economic and financial education are important parts of a broad and balanced curriculum and provide the essential knowledge to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed.

Pupils currently receive financial education through the maths and citizenship curricula, both subjects are in the National Curriculum.

Finance education as part of the citizenship curriculum can be taught at all key stages. The curriculum seeks to develop young people's financial awareness and skills by helping them to look after their money and realise that future wants and needs may be met through saving. This is built on at secondary school to cover income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

The Department has introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides pupils with the knowledge and skills to make important financial decisions. In the primary mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on arithmetical knowledge; this knowledge is vital, as a strong understanding of numeracy will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money. There is also specific content about financial education, including calculations with money.

Schools are also free to include the teaching of financial education in their non-statutory personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) provision if they wish, drawing on the PSHE Association's non-statutory programme of study.

We trust schools to use their professional judgement and understanding of their pupils to develop the right teaching approach for their particular school, drawing on the expertise of subject associations and organisations.

The Department continues to work closely with the Money and Pensions Service and other stakeholders such as Her Majesty's Treasury, to consider what can be learned from a range of external initiatives and whether there is scope to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

■ Adult Education: Finance**Karin Smyth:****[185408]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of adult education funding for colleges facing financial difficulties following the covid-19 outbreak.

Karin Smyth:**[185409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on colleges of clawback of adult education funding.

Karin Smyth: [\[185410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the ability of colleges to be able to offer 90 per cent of adult education during the covid-19 outbreak.

Karin Smyth: [\[185411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Association of Colleges' proposal that his Department adopt a business case approach in determining a provider's ability to deliver 90 per cent of their adult education provision.

Gillian Keegan:

We are lowering the reconciliation threshold for Education and Skills Funding Agency grant funded Adult Education Budget (AEB) adult skills, including non-formula funded community learning and 19-24 traineeships, and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary fund providers for 2020 to 2021, from 97% and 100% respectively to 90%.

Our primary aim is to support providers to continue to deliver as much quality provision as possible, including above the 90% threshold, whether that be face to face where permitted, online or otherwise remotely, and including through subcontracting (for AEB-funded provision only) where that is in line with our subcontracting conditions set out in the rules and contracts.

We acknowledge the situation is still difficult for providers but equally we know that many providers have been able to deliver very successfully remotely during lockdown and the return to face to face learning should enhance further providers' ability to deliver.

We are announcing this change now, to help providers plan their provision better for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year.

In areas where the AEB has been devolved, Mayoral Combined Authorities or the Greater London Authority are responsible for considering any provider flexibilities in their areas.

For those providers who are eligible and are at risk of insolvency, they would be referred to the Insolvency Regime or emergency funding process.

We are monitoring the situation carefully and, in particular, if there are providers that may need further support.

■ **Catering: Lifetime Skills Guarantee**

John Stevenson: [\[183115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that students develop adequate skills to meet the needs of food and drink employers throughout the UK.

John Stevenson:

[\[183116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Lifetime Skills Guarantee meets the needs of food and drink employers.

John Stevenson:

[\[183117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of adding food and drink courses to the list of Level 3 qualifications available under the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

John Stevenson:

[\[183118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to training opportunities in the food and drink industry through the Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

Gillian Keegan:

The Skills for Jobs White Paper, published in January 2021, sets out our blueprint to reform post-16 education and training. It is focused on giving people the skills they need in a way that suits them so they can get good jobs in all sectors, including the food and drink industry.

A range of provision is already available for people of all ages to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress in their chosen careers, including traineeships, which provide unemployed young people with employability training and work experience.

We have also launched T Levels, which are a high-quality technical alternative to A levels. With longer teaching hours and a meaningful, 45-day minimum industry placement, employer-designed T Levels will be excellent preparation for skilled work or further training. The T Level catering pathway will be launched in 2023.

There are a variety of high-quality apprenticeship standards in food and drink manufacturing available for employers to use. They include, but are not limited to, food and drink advanced engineer, baker and senior culinary chef.

Through the free courses for jobs offer, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, we are making courses available that address skills need in the economy, offer good wage outcomes and empower adults with the tools they need to secure a better job.

We have identified hundreds of courses that can give adults the skills they need in the labour market. These qualifications include those that can support employers regardless of their sector, including those in the food and drink industry, with courses in business, accountancy, engineering, marketing and a variety of digital qualifications. We are keeping the list of qualifications and the sector subject areas in scope under review and will consider requests for including courses that meet the published criteria. We have already added more qualifications to the original list. Those qualifications met all the criteria published on GOV.UK.

Qualifications not included in this offer will still be eligible for Advanced Learner Loans (ALL). ALL are income contingent loans that provide extensive coverage of

regulated qualifications from level 3 to level 6, helping to meet up front tuition fees. In the 2019/20 academic year, there were applications to study at nearly 450 training providers, and over 3000 qualifications are currently in scope.

■ **Education: Accountability**

Karin Smyth:

[\[185412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has had discussions with the Department for (a) Work and Pensions and the (b) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the steps required to improve accountability in the further education system in order to meet local need.

Gillian Keegan:

We are having regular conversations with The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the further education reforms we set out in the skills for jobs white paper, where we described our plans to shift the accountability system towards focussing on meeting local and national skills need and giving employers a stronger role in shaping local skills provision through new employer-led plans. We have been having these conversations at official and ministerial level. We have committed to consulting on our proposals on accountability in the spring and will be engaging on the detail with other government departments, including DWP and BEIS, before launching the consultation.

■ **Further Education: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[184513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on colleges of further education of such colleges not being able to furlough staff under the terms of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Gillian Keegan:

College corporations were able to utilise the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to support their staff where the corporation's income streams, either public or non-public, ceased or reduced. The CJRS should only have been used where certain conditions were met, including that the employee on furlough worked in an area of business where services were temporarily not required, the salary was not covered by public funding and that the employee was not involved in delivering provision that had already been funded. Consequently, college corporations not able to furlough staff under the terms of CJRS would have received relevant government funding and therefore there should not have been any adverse financial impact. The Education and Skills Funding Agency continues to support college corporations where they are impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Further Education: Food

Rachael Maskell:

[184515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding he is allocating to further education colleges for students who experience food poverty; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing free school meals for such students.

Vicky Ford:

The government recognises the benefits of providing a healthy meal to the most disadvantaged students and is committed to providing free meals to those that need them.

From September 2014, further education institutions have been required to make provision for free meals to eligible disadvantaged students. The institution can decide for themselves whether to offer a meal, or a voucher or credit to exchange for a meal on-site or off-site.

Further guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>.

Additionally, the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, introduced in 2011, provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. It can be used in conjunction with free meals in further education funding, to meet individual student needs.

■ Further Education: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell:

[184517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he is providing to further education colleges that plan to continue teaching year 11 and year 13 pupils beyond May 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

It is critical that support to year 11 and year 13 students who are completing their programme of study should continue to be supported to progress after May half term this year, as set out in government guidance.

The government is working closely with colleges, schools and universities to ensure that students are supported in the transition between education phases. Many institutions have already established excellent practice in this area, which we intend to extend more broadly.

Additional new support for young people to catch up includes the 16-19 Tuition Fund, which is £96 million this year – providing 15 hours of small group tuition for young people, targeted at those with lower attainment. We have announced that the fund will increase to £102 million next year.

■ Further Education: Mental Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[184516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he is providing colleges of further education to support the mental health of their students.

Gillian Keegan:

Further Education providers (FE) deliver mental health support to their students in their wrap around, pastoral offer. This includes a number of initiatives supported by the department.

For example, we set up the 'Wellbeing for Education Return', an £8 million scheme funding expert advisers and training in every local authority area to support wellbeing recovery as children and young people returned to school and FE from September 2020.

Some of the colleges funded through the £5.4 million College Collaboration Fund are developing new ways to support student and staff mental health and wellbeing, including the 'Let's Chat' programme developed by Weston College. Once developed, these resources will be available to all further education providers online. Details of the College Collaboration Fund are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-collaboration-fund-ccf-projects/resources-college-collaboration-fund-ccf>.

More recently we have announced a £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support, including through Mental Health Support Teams. The support teams – which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges – will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children and young people. This increase means that millions of children and young people will have access to significantly expanded mental health services.

We also know that some FE providers are creating their own innovative programmes to support student and staff mental health. The Sheffield College have rolled out their Uniheads mental health platform, which helps students develop good mental health knowledge and skills, build mental fitness, and address poor mental health.

The department has convened a Mental Health in Education Action Group, which will look specifically at how we support young people with their wellbeing as they return to school, college, and university after this difficult year. On 3 February 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, appointed Dr. Alex George as a Youth Mental Health Ambassador to advise the government and raise the profile of mental health education and wellbeing in schools, colleges, and universities.

■ Nurses: Training

Jonathan Ashworth:

[185371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make capital investment funding available to universities to expand their physical capacity to support

the training of the increased number of students that are due to start nursing degrees in the 2021-22 academic year.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[185372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department plans to provide to universities to meet the additional (a) educational workforce and (b) physical capacity requirements that will result from the increased number of students embarking on nursing degrees in the 2021-22 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

We have asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the Strategic Priorities Grant for 2021/22 to ensure that more of taxpayers' money is spent on supporting higher education provision which aligns with national priorities. This includes the reprioritisation of funding towards the provision of high-cost subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy (which includes nursing), high-cost STEM subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs.

Specifically on capital funding, we want to be assured that capital funding is adding real value and that investment is focused on key government priorities, such as nursing, and supports provision with excellent student outcomes.

In 2021/22, this funding will be allocated through a bidding process that will target specific high-impact projects and activities that offer better value for money for students and taxpayers.

The OfS has launched a public consultation on all these reforms before final allocations for 2021/22 are confirmed and will carefully consider the impact of any changes on providers.

The consultation can be accessed at

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultations/>.

■ **Portsmouth University: Coronavirus**

Stephen Morgan:

[183269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of university students in Portsmouth returning to face-to-face teaching following the end of the current academic term.

Michelle Donelan:

We have always been committed to getting students back onto campus as soon as the public health situation allows. At every stage, we have prioritised students' education and helping students to meet their learning outcomes, which is why students on creative and practical courses or practice-based courses have been able to return to in-person teaching since March.

We understand that, in some universities, teaching may have concluded by 17 May. However, the wider experience outside the classroom is also important and we know that students are keen to get back to campus and universities are keen to have them

back. We want to enable this as soon as the public health situation allows, even if some universities have concluded teaching.

A return in line with step 3 of the roadmap allows time for students to receive some teaching, engage with cocurricular activities, take part in face-to-face careers support and in activities to build employability skills. As students return to campus, there will also be more opportunities for universities to provide mental health support for them.

For many students, teaching does not end in May. For example, postgraduate students, both taught and research, will continue their studies throughout the summer, as will some students on some healthcare courses or who start at different times throughout the year. It is also open to universities, as autonomous institutions, to put on teaching outside of their normal term dates, if they consider this appropriate to fulfil their duties to their students.

■ Students: Finance

Stephen Morgan:

[\[183268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of Government financial support available for university students.

Michelle Donelan:

We understand that this is a very difficult and uncertain time for students. We are working with universities, higher education (HE) institutions, mission groups, unions and professional sector bodies to make sure that all reasonable efforts are being made to enable all students to continue their studies and to provide the support required for them to do so.

In these exceptional circumstances, we recognise that some students may face financial hardship. On 13 April, we announced that we are making a further £15 million of additional student hardship funding available for the 2020/21 academic year. In total, we have made an additional £85 million of funding available for student hardship since December. HE providers have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to students in a way that best prioritises those in greatest need.

To support with this further, we have worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that HE providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged and vulnerable students impacted by COVID-19. HE providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for academic year 2020/21, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment

We want to make sure all students receive the right amount of student support to complete their studies. Students who received a loan for living costs at the living away from home rates in the spring term have received a loan at the same rate in the summer term, even though they may be staying at their family home to comply with public health guidance. This change to the funding rules will help cover any accommodation costs students may still be incurring at their term time address in the summer term. The maximum loans for living costs for the 2020/21 academic year

have been increased by 2.9%, with a further 3.1% increase for the 2021/22 academic year, to record levels in cash terms.

Students who have applied for a loan for living costs for the current 2020/21 academic year have been awarded a lower amount than the maximum and believe their household income for the 2020-21 tax year will drop by at least 15% compared to the household income they provided when they were initially assessed, can apply for their entitlement to be reassessed.

In addition, students undertaking courses that would normally require attendance on-site, but for which learning has moved either fully or partially online due to COVID-19, will qualify for living cost support in the 2020/21 academic year as they would ordinarily, provided they continue to engage with their HE provider. This also applies when the student is prevented from attending the course physically and is required to study online due to shielding.

The current measures aim to target support for students in greatest need, and we will continue to monitor the situation and adjust sector guidance and support where necessary.

■ **Turing Scheme: Educational Exchanges**

Virginia Crosbie:

[185506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the UK becoming an e-Twinning country as part of the Turing Scheme in order to benefit (a) pupils aged 3-19 years in educational collaborations with similar aged children abroad and (b) teachers' continuous professional development.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has decided that it is not in the UK's interests to seek continued participation in the Erasmus+ programme. eTwinning is an EU initiative which is part of the Erasmus+ programme, so as a result our participation in eTwinning has also ended. There are currently no plans for the UK to join eTwinning in the future.

The new Turing Scheme will provide funding for school pupils to participate in international placements and exchanges, and the scheme is currently open for schools to apply. The scheme is not a like-for-like replacement of Erasmus+, and does not replicate the eTwinning online platform, but is focused on providing funding for school pupils to benefit from going overseas. We want to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to travel abroad to experience different cultures, improve language skills and build independence, character, and resilience. The Turing Scheme offers guidance for schools on how to establish international partnerships, including through the British Council Schools Partner Finder. These partnerships also offer teachers the chance to share experiences and best practice with colleagues in other countries.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan:

[\[183267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the clinical evidential basis is for his Department's decision to delay the return of university students to face-to-face teaching.

Michelle Donelan:

We are committed to taking a cautious approach to easing restrictions, guided by data instead of dates. Much of the data that has been used to inform decision making has already been published.

It is important that we continue to take a cautious – but irreversible – approach to re-opening. Moving too fast, too soon, risks a resurgence in infections, hospitalisations and deaths. Whilst we are aware that there is limited evidence of transmission in in-person teaching environments, we must not lose sight of the risks the virus poses and must stay vigilant throughout to ensure this roadmap provides a one-way passage to returning to a more normal life.

We have worked extremely closely with scientists and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) to understand and model various scenarios to inform our plan that seeks to enable us to re-open the country without putting unsustainable pressure on the NHS. We have also examined economic and social data to get a balanced understanding of the impacts of carefully easing restrictions. The government has also carefully considered data on the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on ethnic minority communities, the vulnerable, the young, and low-income groups.

The government has taken into account all the scientific advice and models that suggest that allowing additional indoor mixing at an earlier stage when prevalence is higher and fewer people have been vaccinated would result in significantly higher numbers of infections and that is why restrictions outdoors have been eased first and restrictions on most indoor activity will remain in place. As the number of people vaccinated increases, we anticipate being able to take steps to ease further as more people are protected.

A wealth of data, papers and evidence is being published at the same time as the Roadmap, to ensure transparency on the information the government has had available to it in reaching its decisions. This includes information from Public Health England:

- Information on vaccine effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccination
- A surveillance report with a more detailed summary of the findings so far from the SARS-CoV-2 Immunity & REinfection Evaluation (SIREN) study and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections Watch
- A technical paper on the SIREN analysis being published (as a pre-print) by the Lancet

The papers from SAGE include:

- Minutes from the last 4 SAGE meetings
- Children's Task and Finish Group paper: 'COVID-19 in higher education settings, 10 February 2021'
- 3 papers from the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), with a summary of modelling on scenarios for easing restrictions, together with the supporting papers from modellers at Warwick and Imperial universities
- A collection of papers from SPI-M on "relaxation of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and the re-opening of schools", Independent Pandemic Scientific Insights Group on Behaviours (the behavioural experts' sub-group of SAGE) on return to campus for the spring term and the risk of increased transmission from student migration

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution: Birmingham and Greater Manchester

Munira Wilson:

[184557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of air quality monitoring stations in use in (a) Birmingham and (b) Manchester.

Rebecca Pow:

Information about the number of sites in Defra's national monitoring network is published on the UK Air Information Resource (UK-AIR), this is updated in real-time to provide a live representation of the national monitoring network.

There are 3 air quality monitoring sites which are part of Defra's national monitoring networks located in Birmingham, out of a total of 8 sites in the West Midlands metropolitan county. In Manchester, there are 2 sites from a total of 6 in the Greater Manchester metropolitan county.

In addition to the national UK Air Quality monitoring networks, Local Authorities, businesses and academics carry out monitoring and modelling of air quality. Information on sites managed by Local Authorities and those that make up national networks managed by Defra can be found on UK-Air (<https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/networks/find-sites> and <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/interactive-map>).

■ Animal Welfare

Sir Greg Knight:

[185291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve the welfare of (a) domestic and (b) other animals in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK is a global leader in animal welfare. The Government has already taken significant steps to improve the welfare of domestic and others animals and we are

currently considering the best legislative vehicle to bring forward a range of further animal welfare and animal-related measures to strengthen our position as a world leader in this field. This includes delivering our manifesto commitments when Parliamentary time allows.

We have modernised the regulation (licensing) of a range of animal activities including dog breeding, pet selling and animal boarding. These animal welfare regulations apply modern welfare standards and make it easier for local authorities to enforce.

We banned the commercial third-party sale of puppies and kittens which has been a significant milestone towards disrupting the unscrupulous trade that supports cruel puppy farming and smuggling. Through our national 'Petfished' campaign we continue to educate prospective pet owners on how to source pets responsibly, avoiding the common tricks and tactics used by deceitful sellers which may result in the purchase of a mistreated or unwell pet.

We launched a public consultation on introducing compulsory cat microchipping in England. Microchipping means lost cats can be identified and returned home rather than handed into rehoming charities as strays. It also means that injured cats can be quickly identified by vets and their owners can be informed and involved in their care.

We are supporting the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill which will increase the maximum custodial penalty for animal cruelty offences from six month to five years imprisonment. This increase will act as a strong deterrent to those that commit such appalling acts and provide one of the toughest sanctions in Europe. This legislation, coupled with the Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Act 2019, will also ensure that those who harm service animals are punished accordingly.

We have a strong track record in raising the bar for farm animal welfare standards — such as banning battery cages for laying hens, sow stalls and veal crates and introducing CCTV in all slaughterhouses in England. We will strengthen the regulatory baseline to ensure we maintain our high standards and look to raise them sustainably over time as new research and evidence emerges.

We are currently examining the evidence around the use of cages for farm animals.

We are delivering on our manifesto commitment and we hope to have legislation in place to end live animal exports for slaughter and fattening by the end of the year.

We have consulted on a wide range of proposals to improve animal welfare in transport and we will be publishing our response to the consultation and outlining how we will take reforms forward later this year. We are carefully considering potential improvements identified by the recent review of the regulations concerning the welfare of animals at the time of killing.

We are also co-designing an Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, which aims to promote the production of healthier, higher-welfare farm animals at a level beyond compliance with current regulations. The direction of the Pathway so far has been

developed in active partnership with industry and a range of stakeholders through our co-design approach.

As part of the Pathway, we are developing publicly-funded incentives for English farmers to provide enhanced animal health and welfare beyond the regulatory baseline. These incentives will be for enhancements valued by the public but not sufficiently provided for by the market. Small and large grants will also be used to co-fund investment in measures that will increase animal health and welfare over the statutory baseline.

■ **Birds: Licensing**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[185328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the General License for Bird Gatherings will be reinstated by his Department.

Victoria Prentis:

From 21 April 2021, certain bird gatherings can take place in Great Britain provided the organisers notify the Animal and Plant Health Agency at least seven days before the event and that they meet the requirements of the General Licence. This includes markets, shows, sales, exhibitions of pigeons, budgerigars, canaries, parrots, cockatiels and birds of prey. Some low risk pigeon racing is also permitted. Gatherings of ducks, geese, chickens, turkeys or game birds whether kept commercially as poultry, as pets or for other purposes remain banned. Poultry gatherings will be kept under review.

For a full list of what is permitted see the [guidance for bird gatherings](#) on gov.uk. Definitive requirements are set out in the published General Licence for the relevant administration ([England](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#)).

■ **Fishing Catches: Nature Conservation**

Dawn Butler:

[182019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to protect dolphins, porpoises and whales in the UK from fishing gear; and whether he is planning to implement bycatch solutions to protect endangered species.

Victoria Prentis:

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

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

bycatch in the first instance. As a known hotspot for bycatch, work is already underway in the South West of England. We are currently undertaking trials for a range of mitigation measures in different fisheries along Cornwall's south coast and will be looking to include more fisheries in this over the next 12 months.

In addition, we also fund the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP), which annually reports upon threats facing cetaceans through carrying out post-mortems on stranded animals. As of 1 April 2021, we let a new 10-year contract for this programme, which demonstrates our long-term commitment to monitoring and mitigating such threats, including bycatch.

■ Horses: Animal Welfare

Robert Halfon:

[185348]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals on the licensing of tethered horses.

Victoria Prentis:

With reference to the answers I gave to the Rt Hon Member on 13 April 2021 to PQs [174090](#) and [174091](#), the Government considers that current legislation and guidance provides the right safeguards and powers in respect of horse tethering. However, we will continue to engage with key stakeholders to see if more can be done to promote best practice among horse owners and to optimise partnership working to tackle the issue of inappropriate horse tethering.

■ Marine Environment

Charlotte Nichols:

[182104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to publish a UK Ocean Recovery Strategy in summer 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has an existing strategy - The UK Marine Strategy. The overall objective of the UK Marine Strategy supports the UK's vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas' and is consistent with our commitments in the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Achieving this vision is about protecting the marine environment, preventing its deterioration and restoring it where practical, while allowing sustainable use of marine resources.

In October 2019, we published the updated Marine Strategy Part One which sets out our assessment of the status of UK seas and our targets and indicators for the period up to 2024. In March 2021, we published our update to the Marine Strategy Part Two, which sets out the programmes we have in place to monitor progress against these targets and indicators.

We are currently preparing an update of the Marine Strategy Part Three, which sets out our Programmes of Measures designed to help us achieve or maintain the vision set out in Part One of the Strategy.

■ **Marine Environment: Biodiversity and Climate Change**

Caroline Lucas:

[182033]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to support Regional Fisheries Management Organisations to conserve marine biodiversity and tackle climate change pressures on the oceans.

Victoria Prentis:

As a new, independent member of five RFMOs, the UK is expanding and enhancing our efforts to sustainably manage fisheries, protect ecosystems and combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing at an international scale. These efforts, through our engagement in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, other international organisations such as the FAO, and directly with individual States, will include supporting RFMOs in conserving marine biodiversity and tackling climate change pressures on the ocean.

Our work in RFMOs is complemented by the UK's support of a target to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030 and through our support to conclude negotiations on a new implementing Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

■ **Marine Protected Areas**

Caroline Lucas:

[182032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the ability of (a) Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and (b) sectoral bodies to deliver the management of global Marine Protected Areas in line with protecting 30 per cent of the world's oceans by 2030.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK is championing a target to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030 (the '30by30' target) through its leadership of the Global Ocean Alliance and as ocean co-chair of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

Importantly, the UK supports the conclusion of negotiations on a new implementing Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), which will have provisions that allow for the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in these areas, a key mechanism to deliver '30by30'.

Recognising the important role that Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) play in effective ocean governance, the UK has already joined five and is playing an active role in each of them. RFMOs and other sectoral bodies will be crucial to delivering some of the conservation objectives of the MPAs established

under the BBNJ Agreement. This will require a positive relationship, including enhanced cooperation and coordination, between the new Agreement and these bodies.

To support this, the UK is in favour of a strong obligation on Parties to the new BBNJ Agreement to work within relevant bodies to deliver measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

■ **Neonicotinoids**

Daniel Zeichner:

[184478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason an emergency authorisation for the use of neonicotinoids on sugar beet was approved when the Health and Safety Executive recommended in their advice to the Government that that request for use be refused.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to the neonicotinoid restrictions put in place in 2018 and to the sustainable use of pesticides. Specific requirements for granting an emergency authorisation are laid out in pesticide regulations. In assessing whether the requirements are met, the decision maker considers the benefit of granting an emergency authorisation against an assessment of the potential harm from the proposed use of the product, taking into account the proposed conditions. This specific exemption refers to a non-flowering plant, grown in the East of England only, and we took advice on this from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Expert Committee on Pesticides and our own Chief Scientific Adviser.

The HSE advised that many aspects of the environmental risk assessment met the requirements for standard authorisation. The Government concluded that the remaining risks identified could be mitigated to an acceptably low level and that, with the strict conditions of use in place, these were outweighed by the substantial benefits to crop production from the use of Cruiser SB if 2021 were to be a year of high pest pressure. One of the conditions attached was to ensure that the product would only be used if the pest pressure was predicted to pass a certain threshold. Ultimately, this threshold for usage was not met and so the neonicotinoid was not used on sugar beet crops.

The reasons for the decision to issue this emergency authorisation for the product Cruiser SB were set out more fully in the [Statement on the decision to issue - with strict conditions - emergency authorisation to use a product containing a neonicotinoid to treat sugar beet seed in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

■ **Phosphates: Pollution**

Bill Wiggin:

[185297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to prevent the movement of phosphates between catchment areas.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is committed to tackling the harm caused from waste material spread to land as fertiliser where this is not applied in accordance with good agricultural practice. There are currently no plans to regulate the movement of phosphate-rich material between catchment areas. However, the Farming Rules for Water regulations require spreading to land in England to be done in ways that manage the risk of diffuse pollution and any spreading of this material must be planned in line with soil and crop need.

On the moving of resulting digestate from anaerobic digestion plants, while there is no prohibition on movement of digestate between catchments, its application is regulated by the Farming Rules for Water and, where applicable, the Nitrates Pollution Prevention Regulations in England. The Environment Agency has reviewed the data information on the digestate market place and volumes of digestate currently and has put measures such as increasing reporting and surveillance on permitted sites and requiring the permitted site to demonstrate contingency plans where they may not be able to use or deploy digestate (where doing so would breach regulations). The Environment Agency is also undertaking a review of the anaerobic digestate quality protocol which is considering land pressures and the future market for digestate.

We are also working across Government on further policy solutions to existing issues with digestate spreading, including its impact on air and water quality.

I accept that there is more to be done. As this is a devolved matter, I, and officials in my department, remain engaged with our Welsh counterparts to align efforts on cross-border pollution issues and monitor progress closely.

Bill Wiggin:[\[185302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussion his Department has had with the Welsh Government on tackling the movement of phosphates between catchment areas.

Bill Wiggin:[\[185306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has investigated the movement of digestate from anaerobic digestion plants within catchment areas.

Bill Wiggin:[\[185307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government to tackle the movement of digestate from anaerobic digestion plants between catchment areas in England and Wales.

Bill Wiggin:[\[185309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to prevent the movement of phosphates between catchment areas in England and Wales.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is committed to tackling the harm caused from waste material spread to land as fertiliser where this is not applied in accordance with good agricultural practice. There are currently no plans to regulate the movement of phosphate-rich material between catchment areas. However, the Farming Rules for Water regulations require spreading to land in England to be done in ways that manage the risk of diffuse pollution and any spreading of this material must be planned in line with soil and crop need.

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We are also working across Government on further policy solutions to existing issues with digestate spreading, including its impact on air and water quality.

I accept that there is more to be done. As this is a devolved matter, I, and officials in my department, remain engaged with our Welsh counterparts to align efforts on cross-border pollution issues and monitor progress closely.

■ Pigeon Racing**Dave Doogan:****[185489]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to review the restrictions placed on pigeon racing implemented by his Department due to the perceived transmission risk of bird flu by racing pigeons.

Victoria Prentis:

From 21 April 2021, low risk pigeon racing can take place from locations not on mainland Europe, provided organisers notify the Animal and Plant Health Agency at least seven days before the event and that they meet the requirements of the General Licence. For a full list of what is permitted see the [guidance for bird gatherings](#) on gov.uk. Definitive requirements are set out in the published General Licence for the relevant administration ([England](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#))

■ River Wye: Phosphates**Bill Wiggin:****[185296]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle phosphate pollution in the River Wye.

Bill Wiggin:

[185308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's plans are to reduce pollution in the River Wye.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is committed to improving our water environment and reducing the impact of excess nutrients, including on the River Wye.

Natural England, the Environment Agency and other partners, including Natural Resources Wales, have been working together through a Nutrient Management Board to find effective solutions and document these through an action plan which is currently being drafted. This will identify measures needed to both restore the site to favourable condition and seek to create capacity for development, without harming the natural environment.

Additionally, since 2016 the Environment Agency has been undertaking a significant amount of agricultural compliance and regulatory activity using satellite technology to identify and target locations at high risk of contributing to nutrient and soil pollution. This has been backed up by an extensive programme of advisory and support work delivered by Catchment Sensitive Farming and catchment partners such as the Wye and Usk Foundation and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust to improve agriculture sources of pollution to the River Wye.

Furthermore, there is work underway to tackle phosphate pollution from waste water treatment in the River Wye through catchment partnerships. The Nutrient Management Board, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and the recently announced Storm Overflows Task Force will seek to make further improvements in this space.

I accept that there is more to be done. As this is a devolved matter I, and officials in my department, remain engaged with our Welsh counterparts to align efforts on cross-border pollution issues and monitor progress closely.

Bill Wiggin:

[185303]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the housebuilding moratorium in Herefordshire on levels of phosphate discharge into the River Wye.

Rebecca Pow:

I have been informed by Natural England that the section of the River Wye in Gloucestershire is not in unfavourable condition and therefore the implications of the ruling in the Dutch Nitrogen case do not currently apply in this area. However, we are working across Government to address the issues arising out of the ruling and the subsequent requirement for development to achieve 'nutrient neutrality.'

I co-chair a Task-force with Minister Pincher bringing together Defra, MHCLG, Natural England and Environment Agency officials to develop a clear action plan to tackle the issue. The aim of this group is to both ensure housebuilding can proceed near our most important protected areas whilst not negatively contributing to their

condition, and develop long term solutions to the underlying issue of the condition of protected sites such as the River Wye/Lugg.

In Herefordshire, Herefordshire Council has developed its wetlands scheme and is commissioning the drafting of an 'Interim Delivery Plan' which includes a Phosphate Calculator, with advice from Natural England. This will assist in the development of mitigation options in catchment. Similar schemes are underway at other currently affected sites and are moving forward, such as agreed mitigation being in place for the River Avon SAC.

Furthermore, Natural England's guidance to local authorities is being updated and they are working closely in catchments such as that of the River Wye and Lugg to share details of this ongoing work. We will continue to support developers and local authorities to meet the requirement for nutrient neutrality. We are also working to identify strategic actions to improve the overall condition of the sites and bring them back into a favourable condition.

In Herefordshire, this will include working with Welsh Government and their agencies. I have written to the Welsh Government Minister for the Environment to signal the need to work closely on this issue. Natural England and the Environment Agency, together with Natural Resources Wales and Herefordshire Council, will continue to work together to identify the measures to restore the site to favourable condition, and on creating capacity for development.

The requirement for nutrient neutrality will not affect current levels of Phosphate discharge to the river but it will avoid any further deterioration caused by additional nutrient pollution from waste water at these sites. The Nutrient Neutral approach, once mitigation has been agreed at particular sites, will allow for housebuilding to resume without causing this additional deterioration. There is a national programme under the Water Framework Directive for monitoring the status of rivers and we will continue to assess whether the site is moving toward good ecological status.

■ Rivers: Pollution

Bill Wiggin: [\[185298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when steps Natural England is taking to enforce the European Court of Justice's Dutch nitrate ruling in Gloucestershire.

Bill Wiggin: [\[185299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with Natural England on the adequacy of their guidance to local authorities on river pollution.

Bill Wiggin: [\[185300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the (a) Welsh Government and (b) Natural Resources Wales on their guidance to local authorities on river pollution.

Bill Wiggin:

[185301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government on tackling pollution in the River Wye.

Rebecca Pow:

I have been informed by Natural England that the section of the River Wye in Gloucestershire is not in unfavourable condition and therefore the implications of the ruling in the Dutch Nitrogen case do not currently apply in this area. However, we are working across Government to address the issues arising out of the ruling and the subsequent requirement for development to achieve 'nutrient neutrality.'

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Furthermore, Natural England's guidance to local authorities is being updated and they are working closely in catchments such as that of the River Wye and Lugg to share details of this ongoing work. We will continue to support developers and local authorities to meet the requirement for nutrient neutrality. We are also working to identify strategic actions to improve the overall condition of the sites and bring them back into a favourable condition.

In Herefordshire, this will include working with Welsh Government and their agencies. I have written to the Welsh Government Minister for the Environment to signal the need to work closely on this issue. Natural England and the Environment Agency, together with Natural Resources Wales and Herefordshire Council, will continue to work together to identify the measures to restore the site to favourable condition, and on creating capacity for development.

The requirement for nutrient neutrality will not affect current levels of Phosphate discharge to the river but it will avoid any further deterioration caused by additional nutrient pollution from waste water at these sites. The Nutrient Neutral approach, once mitigation has been agreed at particular sites, will allow for housebuilding to resume without causing this additional deterioration. There is a national programme under the Water Framework Directive for monitoring the status of rivers and we will continue to assess whether the site is moving toward good ecological status.

Rivers: Sewage**Zarah Sultana:**[\[184560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with water companies on the discharging of raw sewage into English rivers.

Rebecca Pow:

Tackling the harm caused by sewer overflows is a top priority for this department.

To achieve this, the new Storm Overflows Taskforce - bringing together Government, the water industry, regulators and environmental NGOs - has agreed to set a long-term goal to eliminate harm from storm overflows. The Taskforce is meeting regularly and working on plans to start making progress towards that goal, and they have commissioned research to gather evidence on the costs, benefits and feasibility of different options.

We are also introducing new duties that will require the Government to publish a plan by September 2022 to reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows and to report progress to Parliament on implementing that plan. We are also introducing duties requiring water companies and the Environment Agency to publish data on storm overflow operations on an annual basis. These legally binding obligations on water companies and Government will reduce pollution in rivers, protecting wildlife and public health.

The Environment Secretary and the Environment Agency Chair have met with underperforming water companies to discuss how Government and industry can work together to drive better environmental performance. The Environment Secretary has set out clear expectations for water companies to improve their environmental performance in the future. I have also met water company CEOs and made clear that the volume of sewage discharged into rivers and other waterways in extreme weather must be reduced.

Water companies are committed in the five-year business planning period (2020-25) to a significant programme of improvements to the monitoring and management of storm overflows at a cost of around £1.1 billion. This investment includes undertaking 800 investigations and 798 improvement schemes to provide environmental improvements by reducing spills from frequently spilling overflows.

With regards to penalties and enforcement, the Environment Agency currently regulates water companies in their operation of storm overflows to ensure they only discharge under strict permitted conditions. Where discharges occur outside of these conditions, the Environment Agency investigates and takes appropriate action, which includes enforcement action if necessary.

Environment Agency action has resulted in 48 prosecutions against water companies in the last six years, securing fines of £35 million. £10.4 million has also been donated to environmental and wildlife trusts organisations in the same period through enforcement undertakings, a voluntary agreement which will include a donation to

environmental charities to restore any harm done. The Environment Agency will continue to take enforcement action against water companies which fail to uphold the law or cause serious environmental harm.

■ **Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes**

Wendy Chamberlain:

[184550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to publish its evaluation of the Seasonal Workers Pilot scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The first-year evaluation information on the Seasonal Workers Pilot scheme will be published later this year.

■ **Trapping**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[185443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning the use of snares in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

We are aware of the concerns around the use of snares, which can cause immense suffering to both target and non-target animals. It is an issue we are looking at closely as part of our continued drive to maintain the highest animal welfare standards in the world.

Anyone using snares has a responsibility under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to act within the law to ensure their activities do not harm protected species or cause any unnecessary suffering.

The Government has no current plans to ban the use of all animal snares. Snares are controlled in England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This already prohibits the use of self-locking snares and the setting of any type of snare in places where they are likely to catch certain non-target animals such as badgers. It also requires snares to be inspected on a daily basis.

When practised to a high standard, and in accordance with the law, snaring can offer an effective means to reduce the harmful impacts of foxes on livestock, game and wildlife.

The code of practice for the use of snares to control foxes in England can be found at <https://basc.org.uk/cop/snares-for-fox-control-in-england/>. This code is designed and owned by the sector, rather than Government. It sets out clear principles for the legal and humane use of snares, using evidence from snare use research to improve snare deployment and design.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Africa: LGBT People****Stephen Doughty:**[\[185378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last raised LGBT+ rights with his counterparts in (a) Uganda, (b) Ghana, (c) Namibia and (d) Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

The UK plays an active role across the world in support of LGBT rights. We want to see an end to violence and discrimination against LGBT people. I made this clear when I spoke at the launch of the Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives in December 2020.

We are very concerned about the criminalisation of homosexuality, and recognise that there is a long way to go before all LGBT people are able to live free and equal lives, including in some parts of Africa. We make regular representations to governments around the world on this issue including in Uganda, Ghana, Namibia and Nigeria. We work through our Embassies and High Commissions, as well as international organisations, including the UN, Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth, to promote non-discrimination towards LGBT people, and to address discriminatory laws. We directly challenge governments that criminalise homosexuality at the highest political levels.

■ **Bahrain: Political Prisoners****Ben Lake:**[\[185462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the incident at Jau Prison on 17 April 2021, what representations he has made to his Bahraini counterpart to ascertain the welfare and whereabouts of (a) Sayed Alawi Alwadaei and (b) Saeed Abdulemam.

James Cleverly:

We have been informed that prison policy is to disperse those involved in this sort of activity amongst the other inmates. Both Sayed Alawi Alwadaei and Saeed Abdulemam have been moved to the new facilities at the Jau Reform and Rehabilitation Centre, which have been inspected by the Ombudsman and the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) and the National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR). We understand that they have access to medical services, and they do not have any health care issues.

Ben Lake:[\[185463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the incident at Jau Prison on 17 April 2021, what plans he has to make representations to his Bahraini counterpart on (a) the welfare of political prisoners in

Bahrain, (b) ensuring that victims of the incident at the prison receive adequate and timely medical care and (c) ensuring that prisoners are able to access phone calls.

James Cleverly:

We have regularly discussed the challenge of managing the Covid-19 pandemic in prisons with senior members of the Bahraini Government. We continue to monitor these conditions through our regular contact with the oversight bodies.

Ben Lake:

[\[185465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the incident at Jau Prison on 17 April 2021, what representations he will make to his Bahraini counterpart on (a) inviting the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit and (b) allowing (i) Human Rights Watch, (ii) Amnesty International and (iii) other human rights organisations and monitoring bodies to enter Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

We understand that the Government of Bahrain has taken steps to engage with the United Nations, and we continue to encourage this engagement. We understand that the Ombudsman has reached out to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, noting that they are keen to work cooperatively on accusations raised by the Non-governmental organisations (NGOs). We encourage both Amnesty and Human Rights Watch to accept this offer of engagement.

■ **Chad: Security**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[184455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure the safety and security of UK citizens in Chad in response to the deterioration in the security situation in that country.

James Duddridge:

Our Travel Advice is clear that British Nationals should leave Chad as soon as possible. We are in touch with British Nationals in Chad to provide support and to set out available options for them to leave. A large proportion have already left. We continue to work closely with authorities and airlines to ensure British Nationals are able to leave Chad as soon as possible. This includes work to secure the exemptions that may be required for people leaving Chad in urgent circumstances.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[184456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on regional security of the conflict in Chad.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by the situation in Chad, condemn any effort to seize power by force, and are urging that violence is swiftly brought to an end. The Foreign Secretary and I have called for stability to be restored and a peaceful, inclusive transition to civilian and constitutional rule.

Instability in Chad could have negative implications for the wider region. Chad plays an important role in regional stability and security, for example through its contributions to the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the Multinational Joint Task Force, which is combatting the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin.

■ Chechnya: LGBT People

Catherine West:

[\[184523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps are being taken to protect the LGBT+ minority in Chechnya.

Wendy Morton:

We remain deeply concerned about the continuing persecution of LGBT individuals in Chechnya. Persecution for being LGBT, anywhere in the world, is abhorrent. As we state in our Travel Advice, there are credible reports of arrest, torture and extrajudicial killing of LGBT individuals in Chechnya. In December 2018 the UK was one of 16 countries to invoke the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism, requiring an independent OSCE investigation. The OSCE Moscow Mechanism's independent 2018 report confirmed allegations of serious human rights violations in Chechnya against LGBT individuals and other groups including unlawful detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings. We continue to urge Russia to implement the recommendations made in the Moscow Mechanism report and to end the climate of impunity for human rights abusers in Chechnya.

On 10 December 2020, we announced designations under our autonomous Global Human Rights sanctions regime, including those responsible for the ongoing torture and murder of LGBT individuals in Chechnya. We continue to raise our concerns about the persecution of LGBT individuals in Chechnya with the Russian Government at all levels. On 17 November 2020, I raised this with my counterpart, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Titov.

■ Commonwealth Fund

Chris Law:

[\[181311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding he has allocated to the Commonwealth Fund programme Women Mediators across the Commonwealth for 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

We are engaged in ongoing discussions with the Steering Committee of the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth Network (WMC) on the future direction of the network and how best the FCDO can support, along with suitable funding options. We remain committed to supporting women's meaningful engagement in peace processes; inclusion is a cornerstone of our new, integrated foreign, security and development policy.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Drew Hendry:

[\[184500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in other countries on promoting global transparency in the reporting of covid-19 case numbers.

Wendy Morton:

Accurately reporting COVID-19 case numbers is critical to mounting an effective response to the pandemic, but is often challenging given limitations in testing capacity, particularly in lower income countries. The UK has supported testing capacity in some vulnerable countries. We have also supported seroprevalence surveys in some countries, which go beyond reported numbers to estimate the true numbers infected, with results published to ensure transparency.

The UK has actively worked to secure the G20 "Call to Action on Corruption and COVID-19," which includes specific commitments around promoting transparency in responses to COVID-19, and we will continue to play a leadership role on the open data agenda internationally.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Julian Sturdy:

[\[184430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of allocating additional funding to COVAX and other international coronavirus programmes to increase the pace of global vaccination and help tackle new overseas virus variants before they arrive in the UK.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are among the largest bilateral contributors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), committing £548 million in 2020. Our contribution included a match-funding pledge that helped encourage \$1 billion of commitments from other donors. The UK's support and contribution to COVAX has helped it reach the milestone of supplying vaccines to over 100 countries and economies.

We recognise the need to improve global coverage, and address new variants to end the acute phase of the pandemic. This is why on Thursday 15 April, I spoke at the AMC Investment Opportunity Launch, supporting the COVAX Advance Market Commitment 2021 investment case to secure a further \$2 billion from donors. This aims to procure 500 million more doses to increase vaccine coverage from 20% to 30% in developing countries in 2021. The UK is championing global access through our Presidency of the G7, and we have committed to share the majority of our surplus vaccine doses with COVAX.

■ Cyprus: Politics and Government

Theresa Villiers: [\[185313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to attend the informal talks sponsored by the UN Secretary General on Cyprus in Geneva from 27 to 29 April 2021.

Theresa Villiers: [\[185314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Government of the Republic of Cyprus on the informal talks sponsored by the UN Secretary General on Cyprus in Geneva from 27 to 29 April 2021.

Theresa Villiers: [\[185315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what objectives he has for the UK's participation in the informal talks sponsored by the UN Secretary General on Cyprus in Geneva from 27 to 29 April 2021.

Wendy Morton:

A Cyprus Settlement is in the best interests of the Cypriot communities, the wider region and the UK. The Foreign Secretary will represent the UK as a Guarantor Power at the UN-led informal five-party talks from 27-29 April. The aim of the meeting - as set out by the UN Secretary General - is to determine whether common ground exists for the parties to negotiate a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable timeframe. The UK will continue to actively support the UNSG in his effort to this end.

The Foreign Secretary spoke to the Cypriot FM on 22 March and the Turkish Foreign Minister on 23 March. The Foreign Secretary visited the island on 4 February and met President Anastasiades, Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and the UN. The Foreign Secretary also met the Greek Foreign Minister on 2 February. The UK is urging all sides to approach the UN talks in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. During my visit to Cyprus (7-9 April), I reiterated this message and the UK's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue.

■ Democratic Republic of the Congo: Malnutrition

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[184527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction to the aid budget on support and treatment for acute malnutrition for children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

James Duddridge:

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid to 0.5% of GNI. We will remain a world-leading ODA donor and still spend

more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty, tackle climate change and improve global health.

We are working through what this means for individual programmes. Decisions will be communicated in due course. The UK remains a committed development partner to the Democratic Republic of Congo, including on the treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition. Through our humanitarian and health programmes, we have provided treatment for almost 900,000 children over the last 7 years.

■ Developing Countries: Environment Protection and Water

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[183237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance has been spent on (a) water supply and sanitation, (b) renewable energy and (c) general environment protection in each of the last five years.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The Statistics on International Development (SID) National Statistics report, published on the gov.uk website, provides an overview of all official UK spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA). Detailed breakdowns of 2020 ODA spend, including spend by sector, will be published in autumn 2021, therefore the most recent five years with relevant data available are 2015 to 2019.

The total UK bilateral ODA spend to the OECD defined sectors of (a) Water Supply and Sanitation, (b) Renewable Energy and c) General Environment Protection between 2015 and 2019 is set out in the table below:

Table 1. UK bilateral ODA spend by broad sector

	£MILLION				
Sector	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Water supply and sanitation	183	170	177	207	176
Renewable energy	56	79	54	104	106
General environment protection	318	303	306	334	330

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

These sectors will also receive aid from multilaterals, to which the UK contributes.

■ Diseases and Health: Research

Stephen Doughty:

[\[184459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the total spending of his Department was on health and disease related research in each of the last five years.

Wendy Morton:

The total spend on centrally commissioned health and disease related research by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office over the last five financial years is as follows:

2016/17 - £84.65 million

2017/18 - £122.08 million

2018/19 - £132.33 million

2019/20 - £155.41 million

2020/21 - Final and audited spend for 2020/21 will be published in our annual report later this year.

■ Eritrea: Tigray

Hilary Benn:

[\[184361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of (a) whether Eritrean troops have withdrawn from Tigray and (b) the humanitarian situation in Tigray.

James Duddridge:

Eritrea's role in the Ethiopian conflict, including the continued presence of its armed forces, is particularly concerning. These forces must leave Ethiopia immediately, as I [Minister Duddridge] made clear to the Eritrean Ambassador on 16 March, and we also set out in our joint statement with the G7 on 2 April. There are numerous reports of atrocities involving Eritrean forces, and the presence of Eritrean forces is fuelling insecurity. We are closely monitoring the situation and are clear that their withdrawal must be swift, unconditional and verifiable. We have yet to see any evidence that Eritrean forces are leaving Tigray in line with the commitment made by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy in his announcement on 26 March and will continue pressing for this commitment to be delivered.

The humanitarian situation in Tigray is poor. Basic services have collapsed and the humanitarian response is hampered by poor security and access. The UK has been consistent in calling for the protection of civilians in Ethiopia, unfettered humanitarian access, and respect for human rights. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are delivering support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. A joint humanitarian and political team from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa visited Tigray 4-5 March and 4-7 April. They met with the provisional administration of Tigray, the Mayor of Mekelle, the Interim Head of Administration in

Shire and with humanitarian agencies working in the region. They spoke directly to people displaced by violence and heard harrowing accounts of human rights violations. The team also saw UK Aid work in action and learned of the challenges across Tigray.

■ Ethiopia: Armed Conflict and Humanitarian Aid

Dawn Butler:

[\[182014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) help end the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Tigray and (b) ensure that the Ethiopian Government re-opens the humanitarian corridor to allow support for Tigrayans.

James Duddridge:

The UK has been consistent in calling for the protection of civilians in Ethiopia, unfettered humanitarian access, and respect for human rights. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are delivering support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. A joint humanitarian and political team from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa visited Tigray 4-5 March and 4-7 April. They met with the provisional administration of Tigray, the Mayor of Mekelle, the Interim Head of Administration in Shire and with humanitarian agencies working in the region. They spoke directly to people displaced by violence and heard harrowing accounts of human rights violations. The team also saw UK Aid work in action and learned of the challenges across Tigray.

The G7, under the UK Presidency, issued a statement on 2 April urging parties to the conflict to provide immediate, unhindered humanitarian access. The statement also highlighted our concern for worsening food insecurity, with emergency conditions prevailing across extensive areas of central and eastern Tigray.

Currently 4.5 million are in need of food aid. I [Minister Duddridge] shared the UK's concerns on food security with the International Development Committee on 18 March. To date the UK has provided £19 million of badly needed support to people in Tigray - to deliver critical food aid, safe drinking water, sanitation and nutritional supplies and medical care. The British Ambassador continues to make clear our concerns, most recently with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister in March.

■ Ethiopia: Politics and Government

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[181223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure peace in Ethiopia following recent violence between the Ethiopian Government and protestors.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by the ongoing ethnic violence and protests in Ethiopia including in the Oromia and Amhara regions. I [Minister Duddridge] raised growing ethnic tensions and the need for political dialogue as long ago as July 2020 when I last

visited, including with the President of the Oromo region. The Foreign Secretary raised the importance of respect for human rights and credible elections to maintain peace and security when he met with Prime Minister Abiy during his visit to Ethiopia on 22 January. We will continue to champion open and free political expression for all Ethiopians.

■ Falkland Islands: Fisheries

Stephen Doughty:

[\[185375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on securing access for Falkland Islands fisheries to the EU single market.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is fully committed to supporting the Overseas Territories, and we will continue to do all we can to protect their interests. During negotiations of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, we made clear to the EU from the outset that we were negotiating on behalf of the Overseas Territories. However, the European Commission refused to negotiate a future relationship that included the Overseas Territories.

We sought to change the Commission's position, but it declined to engage. As a result, tariffs now apply on exports from the Overseas Territories to the EU, particularly exports from the Falkland Islands. We are working with the Falkland Islands Government to agree the appropriate actions to mitigate against the impact of tariffs on their exports to the EU.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contact Tracing

Chris Green:

[\[183175\]](#)

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

Chris Green:

[\[183176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to use the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Wendy Morton:

No assessment has yet been made, nor any decisions made, on whether to use the data systems used by NHS Test and Trace for other purposes beyond those related to Covid-19. Any work to assess potential future uses of these data systems would be met from within the financial resources already allocated to NHS Test and Trace for the 2021/22 financial year.

Chris Green:

[\[183177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on future uses of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Wendy Morton:

No such discussions have taken place.

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

Stephen Doughty:

[\[185377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many personnel his Department has posted to each High Commission, Embassy or Office in (a) Nigeria, (b) Somalia, (c) Ethiopia, (d) Kenya, (e) South Africa, (f) Ghana and (g) Mozambique in each of the last five years.

Nigel Adams:

We have interpreted the question to mean how many UK Based staff were posted by the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development and currently Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to all posts in Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana and Mozambique in each of the financial years, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21. The figures shown are based on the headcount as at 31 March in each financial year.

	FCDO	LEGACY FCO AND DFID			
	Headcount 31/03/2021	Headcount 31/03/2020	Headcount 31/03/2019	Headcount 31/03/2018	Headcount 31/03/2017
Nigeria	60-69	70-79	60-69	60-69	50-59
Somalia	10-19	10-19	10-19	10-19	10-19
Ethiopia	40-49	40-49	40-49	40-49	40-49
Kenya	60-69	70-79	70-79	60-69	50-59
South Africa	30-39	30-39	20-29	20-29	30-39
Ghana	20-29	10-19	10-19	10-19	10-19
Mozambique	10-19	10-19	10-19	10-19	10-19

■ Human Rights

Dan Carden:

[\[181412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to update the Government's strategy on supporting human rights defenders.

Nigel Adams:

The UK strongly supports Human Rights Defenders worldwide to enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear. We are considering carefully the request from Amnesty International and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for a UK Government strategy on Human Rights Defenders. In 2019, the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders' which was drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International, and which sets out how the UK Government engages with Human Rights Defenders to advance the human rights agenda globally.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[184564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of Iran's ballistic missile programme with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly:

Iran's ballistic missile programme is destabilising for the region and poses a threat to European security. UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was unanimously adopted in the Security Council and underpins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon. Alongside France and Germany (as E3), we have written repeatedly to the UN Secretary-General, most recently on 18 February, to bring attention to Iranian missile activity inconsistent with UNSCR 2231. We urge Iran to fully abide by UNSCR 2231 and all other relevant resolutions.

■ Iran: Uranium

Marco Longhi:

[\[183306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart since Iran's announcement that it has started enriching uranium to 60 per cent purity.

James Cleverly:

Iran's announcement on 16 April that they have started uranium enrichment up to 60% using advanced centrifuges is a serious and deeply worrying development in violation of its nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This is the latest step in Iran's continued and systematic non-compliance

with the JCPoA. The production of highly enriched uranium is an important step in the production of a nuclear weapon. Iran has no credible civilian need for enrichment at this level.

The UK has made multiple official level representations to the Iranians on this issue, both bilaterally and as the E3 alongside the governments of France and Germany. As the E3 said in a statement on 14 April, this step is contrary to the constructive spirit and good faith of discussions in Vienna that have the objective of finding a rapid diplomatic solution to revitalise and restore the JCPoA.

We continue to work with the parties to the JCPoA and the US Administration to seize the diplomatic opportunity for a full return to the JCPoA. We call upon Iran to avoid any escalatory measures which make a return to mutual compliance harder to achieve.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Hilary Benn:

[\[182013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the treatment of Palestinian children held in Israeli military detention.

James Cleverly:

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children.

We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention.

■ League of Arab States

Ruth Jones:

[\[180598\]](#)

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

James Cleverly:

The UK Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and Red Sea met with League of Arab States representatives to discuss developments in East Africa during his visit to Egypt in January. British Embassy officials in Cairo regularly engage with the League of Arab States secretariat on a wide range of regional issues. As stated in a UN Security Council session in January, the UK supports the League's efforts to promote regional peace and security.

■ Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[184407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish his Department's Official Development Assistance budget where gender equality is an important objective of the project for (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019 and (f) 2020.

Wendy Morton:

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO's) ODA spend, including that on gender equality activities and past spend, is made publicly available through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) statistics portal. All ODA spend is screened against the OECD gender equality policy marker. This is a measurement of the proportion of aid that supports gender equality and women's empowerment. An activity can be marked as 'principal' if gender equality is the main objective of the programme, or as a 'significant' if gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the programme.

The latest figures available (2019) show that approximately **68 per cent** of the former Department for International Development (DFID) and the former Foreign & Commonwealth Office's (FCO) total bilateral spend was marked principal or significant. This equates to **£5.2 billion**. Figures for previous years are also available on the OECD statistics portal. The 2020 figures have not yet been released.

Advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights are a core part of this Government's mission and we remain steadfast in our commitment to this agenda.

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014, legally requires all overseas development funding to meaningfully consider the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality.

■ Overseas Aid: Palm Oil

Stephen Doughty:

[185379]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any projects involving the production of palm oil have been funded by Official Development Assistance from (a) his Department and (b) the Commonwealth Development Corporation in any of the last three years.

James Duddridge:

FCDO supports trade in sustainable palm oil and efforts to tackle deforestation associated with palm oil through a combination of diplomatic engagement, policy measures and development assistance. FCDO, jointly with BEIS, fund the Partnerships for Forests programme which works with the Government of Indonesia to strengthen Indonesia's palm oil sustainability standards. FCDO also provides funds to the Tropical Forest Alliance which brings together over 180 companies, governments and civil society organisations to tackle deforestation associated with palm oil and other commodities. The Government also supports the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil initiative, which works towards a commitment to source

100% of palm oil from sustainable sources, and through the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership we continue to collaborate with other European countries to implement similar commitments.

In the past three years CDC has supported one business involved in the primary production of palm oil - Feronia Inc. CDC's investment into the company, based in a remote area of DRC, was aimed at providing economic opportunities for local people as well as improvements to healthcare, education, clean water and infrastructure provision.

■ **Pakistan: Abduction and Forced Marriage**

Jim Shannon:

[\[181269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support he has offered the Pakistani Government to improve levels of safety at safe shelters in Pakistan for girls who have been kidnapped and forcibly married.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls in Pakistan. We regularly raise our concerns on these issues with the government of Pakistan. Most recently, Lord Ahmad raised our human rights concerns, including Freedom of Religion or Belief, with Pakistan's Special Representative for Religious Harmony, Tahir Ashrafi, on 23 March 2021. Lord Ahmad also raised these concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 20 February 2021. Pakistan remains a FCDO Human Rights Priority Country. The UK's Strengthening Rule of Law in Pakistan programme has worked with civil society to develop human rights based standards and protocols for gender based violence shelters in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

■ **Palestinians: Israel**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[185445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he will take to tackle the import to the UK of products from illegal settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

James Cleverly:

In order to enable consumers to make a more fully informed decision concerning the products they buy, in December 2009, the UK introduced voluntary guidelines to enable produce from Israeli settlements in the OPTs to be specifically labelled as such.

■ **Protais Mpiranya**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[182116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to encourage Zimbabwe to give up Rwanda Genocide suspect Protais Mpiranya to allow him to face trial.

James Duddridge:

We are aware of reports that suspected genocidaire, Protais Mpiranya, is believed to be in Zimbabwe. The UK supports the UN investigation to locate him. We call on Zimbabwe to work with the UN. We are encouraged that Zimbabwe and Rwanda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 19 March regarding legal mutual assistance on criminal matters as part of a four-day virtual Joint Permanent Commission to strengthen bilateral relations. The UK remains fully committed to ensuring perpetrators of the genocide are held to account and justice is achieved.

■ **Qatar: Dangerous Driving****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[185391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect British citizens in Qatar involved in cases of dangerous driving.

James Cleverly:

Our consular staff endeavour to give appropriate and tailored support to British nationals overseas, and their families in the UK, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. What we can and cannot do is set out in our Supporting British Nationals Abroad: A guide (www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide). We highlight the specific risks on local road safety to those travelling overseas through our Travel Advice which is regularly reviewed and updated, including that for Qatar. Our advice for Qatar currently advises of poor road discipline, high speeds, warns that minor accidents are common and that there is a very high fatality rate for road accidents.

We work in partnership with UK charity Brake, who provide emotional and practical support to families bereaved through road traffic accidents overseas. Officials in Qatar are in regular contact with the Qatari authorities and raise consular issues as appropriate, including those related to road traffic safety.

■ **Rafaelle Tsakanika****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[185392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure co-operation from the Qatari authorities in the inquest into the killing of Cambridge resident Rafaelle Tsakanika in a hit-and-run incident in Doha in 2019, including the sharing of their full file of evidence with the Coroner.

James Cleverly:

We have contacted HM Coroner to find out what documentation they require from the Qatari authorities for the inquest into Ms Tsakanika's death. Once we know HM Coroner's requirements we will submit a request to the Qatari Authorities for this documentation via normal diplomatic channels and will follow up as appropriate.

■ Sahel: Overseas Aid

Stephen Doughty:

[\[185376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish the Official Development Assistance spend on (a) security sector reform, (b) conflict prevention, (c) preventing violence against women and girls in each of the Sahel region countries in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

In the Sahel, Official Development Assistance (ODA) for security sector reform, conflict prevention, and preventing violence against women and girls has principally been delivered through the Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). This is a cross government fund which focuses on tackling instability and preventing conflicts that threaten UK interests.

A breakdown of CSSF ODA spend across the five Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) can be found in table A4f of the 'Additional tables: Statistics on International Development Final UK Aid Spend' under 'Statistics on International Development' which are published annually here:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development. Figures for 2019 are published separately here: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2019. Figures for 2020 will be published in due course on the gov.uk website here: www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development.

■ Small Charities Challenge Fund

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[185454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many applications have been (a) received, (b) approved and (c) provisionally approved for the Small Charities Challenge Fund since that fund was established; and how much money from that fund has been dispersed.

Wendy Morton:

Since the formation of the Small Charities Challenge Fund in July 2017, 1038 applications have been submitted, of which 948 applications were eligible for review. To date, 81 grants have been approved. The total funds disbursed is £3.23 million.

■ Sultana Khaya

Navendu Mishra:

[\[182106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has raised the case of Sultana Khaya with his Moroccan counterpart.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports concerning Sultana Khaya and are monitoring the case. Support for human rights and human rights defenders is a UK priority around the

world, and we continue to raise human rights issues with the Moroccan Government accordingly.

■ **Syria: Islamic State**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[182073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of British nationals associated with ISIS detained in north-east Syria in areas under the control of the Kurdish authorities; and how many of those British nationals are children.

James Cleverly:

We are aware that British nationals, including children, are located in IDP camps in north east Syria. Due to the shifting circumstances on the ground we are not in a position currently to make an accurate estimate of their number.

We endeavour to locate British unaccompanied or orphaned children, who are innocent victims of war, and work with partners to facilitate their return where feasible (taking into account national security concerns). Establishing their whereabouts and identity is not straightforward, but we have facilitated a number of such returns to the UK. The Foreign Secretary noted on 21 November 2019, following the first repatriation of children, that they "should never have been subjected to the horrors of war" and that their return home was facilitated "because it was the right thing to do." Each case is considered on a case by case basis.

■ **Tigray: Armed Conflict**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[181224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that accurate information is available concerning the recent conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by instances of media personnel being detained or harassed in Tigray and have lobbied alongside the international community to secure their release. We are also concerned about limitations to access, including the revocation of media licenses, and access to information and communication networks. A free and independent media in Ethiopia is vital to protect human rights. The lack of telephone and internet services in Tigray is hampering humanitarian relief and extending the suffering of the 4.5 million people in Tigray in desperate need.

We continue to raise the importance of political and media freedoms with senior officials, and did so directly with Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke on the 5 March. We continue to call for the restoration of communication services in Tigray. We will continue to champion open and free political expression in the run up to the 5 June elections in the country.

■ Tigray: Human Rights

Stephen Morgan:

[\[181413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Answer of 9 March 2021 to Question 161799 on Ethiopia: Violence, if he will make further representations to his counterpart in the Government of Ethiopia on the need for independent, international, investigations into allegations of human right abuses and violations in the Tigray region of that country.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned at the mounting evidence of human rights abuses and violations in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Since the conflict started, the UK alongside international partners, have consistently called for an end to fighting, and for all parties to the conflict to prioritise the protection of civilians. We will hold Prime Minister Abiy to his statement on 23 March that the perpetrators of human rights atrocities should face justice - whoever they are. Further atrocities including sexual and gender-based violence must stop and an independent investigation of those that have occurred must take place. The UK will support the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights' planned investigations.

In a joint statement on Ethiopia with 41 other countries at the 46th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, we condemned in the strongest terms the reported killings of civilians. Eritrea's role in the conflict is particularly concerning; there are numerous reports of atrocities involving Eritrean forces, and the presence of Eritrean forces is fueling insecurity. We welcome the announcement, on 26 March by Prime Minister Abiy that Eritrean forces will withdraw and call for this to be swift, unconditional and verifiable - we have yet to see any evidence that Eritrean forces are leaving Tigray and will continue pressing for this commitment to be delivered.

■ UN Human Rights Council

Stephen Doughty:

[\[184458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the UK Government's priorities are at the UN Human Rights Council over the next six months.

Nigel Adams:

As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK will continue to play a leading international role in multilateral governance and use our diplomacy at the UN to defend universal human rights and promote women's economic empowerment. As such our priorities at the Human Rights Council are to continue to hold states that violate human rights to account, to promote girls' education and work to end violence against women and girls, defend freedom of religion or belief, support democratic values, and protect media freedom.

■ Zimbabwe: Coronavirus**Navendu Mishra:** [\[182115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support is the Government providing to Zimbabwe to support covid-19 testing and vaccination in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK quickly adapted existing programmes in early 2020 to support the COVID-19 response in Zimbabwe. This included funding through the World Health Organisation (WHO) to support national coordination efforts, the development of the National COVID-19 Strategy, and work to enhance the capacity of the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC). UK funding also provided community messaging, support for frontline workers, water sanitation and hygiene improvement in schools and health facilities, and humanitarian food and cash aid to help mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable. Through the Health Development Fund and WHO, the UK supported development of the National Vaccine Deployment Plan (NVDP), COVID-19 Demand Generation Strategy, Testing Strategy, capacity building of lab scientists, rapid response teams on testing, procurement of tests, and establishment of surveillance mechanisms. Zimbabwe has been confirmed as a participant for the COVAX facility and is eligible for 3 million doses, with 984,000 allocated in the initial round. The UK's Ambassador to Zimbabwe met Vice President Chiwenga on 23 December 2020 to discuss COVID vaccines and reiterated the UK commitment to support equitable access to vaccines through the COVAX facility.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling****Dan Carden:** [\[184538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to begin the 12 week consultation on calorie labelling for alcohol products; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Through 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives', published in July 2020, we are committed to consult shortly on our intention to make companies provide calorie labelling on all pre-packaged alcohol they sell. The consultation will also cover introducing calorie labelling on alcoholic drinks sold in the out of home sector, for example bought on draught or by the glass.

■ Cancer: Coronavirus**Sir George Howarth:** [\[172013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on people diagnosed with cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Cancer Programme is currently establishing a task and finish group to review alterations and/or disruptions to care pathways, including services for those with secondary breast cancer, during the pandemic. Once a group has been established the group will consider the most appropriate data sources with which to make this assessment.

Cancer diagnosis and treatment has remained a top priority for the Government throughout the pandemic. From March 2020 to the end of January 2021, 1.86 million people have been urgently referred and over 477,000 people started receiving cancer treatment. First and subsequent cancer treatments have been maintained at 87% of the level in 2019.

The Government has taken a number of steps to ensure people can continue to access high-quality cancer care throughout the pandemic. For example, there are currently 65 live regional diagnostic centre pathways across hospitals in England, compared to 12 in March 2020.

Additionally, COVID-19 protected hubs for cancer surgery have been established to keep vulnerable cancer patients safe. This particularly protects cancer patients from immunocompromised infection. All 21 Cancer Alliances across England have arrangements in place for surgical cancer hubs. Adults experiencing cancer can access Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) mental health services, which provide evidence based therapies for people with anxiety disorders and depression. The implementation of IAPT/long term condition pathways has been identified as a priority to support integration of mental health and physical health services for people with co-morbid long term conditions, such as cancer.

Navendu Mishra:**[182111]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the delivery of cancer treatment.

Jo Churchill:

From March 2020 to the end of February 2021, over two million people have been urgently referred and over 520,000 people started receiving cancer treatment. First and subsequent cancer treatments have been maintained at 87% of the level in 2019.

The National Health Service priorities and operational planning guidance for 2021/22 sets out plans to accelerate the restoration of elective and cancer care. Local systems, drawing on advice and analysis from their Cancer Alliance, will ensure that there is sufficient diagnostic and treatment capacity in place to meet the needs of cancer to return the number of people waiting for longer than 62 days to the level of February 2020 or to the national average in February 2020 where this is lower and meet the increased level of referrals and treatment required to address the shortfall in number of first treatments by March 2022.

■ Cancer: Health Services**Tim Farron:** [\[174792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the additional £6.6 billion made available to the NHS until September 2021, announced on 18 March 2021, will be allocated to cancer services and tackling the cancer backlog.

Tim Farron: [\[174793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2021 to Question 149173 on Cancer: Medical Treatments, how much of the additional £1 billion made available at the 2020 Spending Review to help tackle the elective backlog will be allocated directly to addressing the cancer backlog.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

Funding allocations for services is a decision for local service providers, though cancer funding continues to be a priority.

Rachael Maskell: [\[183204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his plans are to continue procuring (a) hospital beds and (b) staffing from the independent sector for cancer services in (i) England and (b) York.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service has benefited from an unprecedented partnership with private hospitals which has been crucial in ensuring that more facilities are available for patients diagnosed with COVID-19.

From 1 April 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement have returned to local commissioning arrangements. The new Increasing Capacity Framework will see more than 90 providers across England making themselves available to be commissioned locally by trusts and clinical commissioning groups, with services delivered at pre-determined prices. This will support the NHS, including cancer services, to continue to make use of the independent sector as part of our recovery from COVID-19.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**Chi Onwurah:** [\[148785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care homes in Newcastle have had their covid-19 vaccination days cancelled without notice.

Nadhim Zahawi:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Coronavirus

Layla Moran:

[\[179462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of his Department's spending on external consultants working on long Covid to date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: NHSX commissioned work to explore a patient-facing self-monitoring 'long' COVID-19 solution at a cost of £205,000.

■ Coronavirus: Children

Emma Hardy:

[\[181405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people who are under the age of 18 and experiencing symptoms of long-covid.

Jo Churchill:

The 'long' COVID-19 assessment service centres developed by NHS England and NHS Improvement have been commissioned to provide assessment for adults, children, and young people, with input from paediatric specialists where appropriate. Any parent or guardian concerned that a child may be exhibiting symptoms of Long COVID should go to their GP, who will be able to refer the child for assessment if appropriate.

To help better understand and address the longer-term effects of COVID-19 on physical and mental health, on 18 February 2021 the Government announced £18.5 million of funding would be given to four research studies. This includes a study led by Professor Sir Terence Stephenson, at UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, which is looking into long COVID-19 among children, how it can be diagnosed and how to treat it.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Chris Green:

[\[181012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the World Health Organisation on the criteria for declaring the end of the covid-19 global pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

There have been no recent discussions. Such considerations are for the Director-General of the World Health Organization, with the advice of independent technical experts and based on public health evidence and data.

Chris Green:

[\[181013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department plans to use to define the end of the covid-19 outbreak in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

Over time, scientists expect COVID-19 to become endemic, meaning the virus will reach a stable and, it is hoped, manageable level. Scientists do not yet know how or when that transition will occur, so the Government has not determined criteria for the end of the pandemic. The Government will continue to be guided by the best available scientific advice and the latest data when responding to the virus.

Coronavirus: Health Services**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[178907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish the number of patients who have received an assessment through the NHS post-COVID assessment service since Oct 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: Referral data for NHS England and NHS Improvement's 'long' COVID-19 assessment services is experimental and has not yet been validated. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently working with regions and systems to develop and refine processes to collect activity and demographic data for the assessment clinics. From summer 2021, activity data on referral, number of assessments, waiting times and the onward patient journey will be published monthly.

Coronavirus: Ivermectin**Sir Graham Brady:**[\[180403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the efficacy of ivermectin as a (a) prophylactic and (b) treatment for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Department continues to monitor evidence on the use of ivermectin both as a prophylactic and treatment for COVID-19. A recent collection of small studies shows some positive indications that ivermectin may act as a treatment for COVID-19. However, further high quality, larger-scale studies are still needed to confirm the safety and efficacy of this treatment. The Therapeutics Taskforce will keep the position on ivermectin under review as more data becomes available.

Coronavirus: Key Workers**Sam Tarry:**[\[179662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what protections his Department has put in place for key workers that travel to work and live with vulnerable people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Sam Tarry:

[179665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what covid-19 workplace protections have been put in place for keyworkers who are travelling to and from work and are living with vulnerable people.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has not put in place specific protections for key workers travelling to work. However, safer travel guidance for all passengers is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Guidance for working safely during COVID-19 is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Although shielding is not currently in place, clinically extremely vulnerable people who are at higher risk of serious illness if they contract COVID-19 are advised to take extra precautions to reduce their risk of infection. Updated guidance, including advice to maintain social distancing when meeting with people from outside their household, is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[178984]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's announcement on 5 April 2021 that everyone in England will be able to access free, regular rapid coronavirus testing from 9 April 2021, what recent estimate he has made of the number of tests that will be administered on a weekly basis.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: The eligible population for testing is now above 50 million. Supply and demand forecasting is updated on a daily basis, including estimates of lateral flow tests administered, currently modelled at around 35 to 45 million tests per week in England.

Justin Madders:

[179194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March 2021 to Question 162633, on Coronavirus: Screening, how many and what proportion of covid-19 tests were processed in the UK in (a) total and (b) each month since March 2020.

Jo Churchill:

This data is not held in the format requested.

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[180945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department takes to ensure that when people choose to opt-out of the REACT covid-19 testing research study that their wishes are recorded and that they cease to be contacted; and if he will make statement.

Jo Churchill:

The REACT study is being conducted by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department. Participation in the REACT study is voluntary and participants can withdraw from the study at any time. This is managed by Ipsos MORI via a dedicated helpline and inbox that handle all queries including opt out. This ensures that participants who opt out will no longer be contacted by the study. If Ipsos MORI receive a request to cease future contact indefinitely, participants' details are also added to their corporate 'do not contact' database, against which all future survey samples are screened.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[181394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 March 2021 to Question 174248, on Coronavirus: Screening, for what reason rapid covid-19 testing kits were not available to early years and nursery practitioners prior to March 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Prior to January rapid testing kits were available to early years staff via the community testing programme. Since January we have offered early years staff in schools-based and maintained nursery schools access to home lateral flow device test kits for twice weekly testing. In March, this was expanded to include all staff in private, voluntary and independent nurseries, as well as the households, childcare and support bubbles of all staff and children in early year settings.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[133107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to promote the uptake of the covid-19 vaccine among social care staff; and if he will publish figures on the number of care workers who have (a) received and (b) refused to have the vaccine.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[138889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage care workers to have a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: A five-week consultation was launched on 14 April to inform decision-making to make vaccination a condition of staff deployment in older adult care home providers. We have also introduced a minimum four-visit schedule to ensure as many care home staff and residents can be vaccinated on-site

as possible. For those workers who may not have been present when the vaccination team visited the specific care home, access via other vaccination services has been available. Care home workers who would like to be vaccinated can now also arrange vaccination directly through their general practitioner.

Additionally, a significant programme of work is underway to help boost uptake in all communities, including for care workers and social care staff, as set out in the UK COVID-19 Uptake Plan which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-uptake-plan/uk-covid-19-vaccine-uptake-plan>

NHS England publish weekly data on the number of vaccines doses administered to National Health Service trust and social care staff in England, which is available at the following link:

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

Data on those who refuse the COVID-19 vaccine is not collected centrally.

Helen Hayes:

[134010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment has he made of the adequacy of (a) staffing levels, (b) number of vaccines available, and (c) resources for covid-19 vaccination clinics in (i) Lambeth, (ii) Southwark and (iii) London.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: Information on the staffing levels, number of vaccines and resources for COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Lambeth, Southwark and London is not held centrally.

As of the latest weekly data published on 15 April 2021, there has been good progress on vaccination uptake, with 108,258 doses administered in Lambeth and 102,347 in Southwark. Local National Health Service leaders are working with national and local partners across the NHS, local government, health and social care partnerships and voluntary sector to access resources, such as the workforce, when establishing vaccination clinics in Lambeth and Southwark, while continuing to ensure adequate resources are available to existing sites. NHS England has used 100% of vaccines supplied.

Neil Coyle:

[136539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to require NHS staff organising covid-19 vaccination appointments to ask patients for proof of residence in the UK.

Neil Coyle:

[136540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to require NHS staff organising covid-19 vaccination appointments to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccination against COVID-19 is offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status. Entitlement to free National Health Service treatment is generally based on ordinary residence in the UK. A person who can show they have taken up ordinary residence in the UK can access all NHS services immediately, including COVID-19 vaccinations, based on clinical need. No immigration checks are needed to receive these services and the NHS is not required to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

A NHS number is not needed to make a booking for a COVID-19 vaccine or when attending a vaccination appointment. If individuals are registered with a general practitioner (GP), then their GP will contact them in due course. We understand that not everyone is registered with a GP, including those experiencing homelessness, people who may not live in a fixed location, refugees and those seeking asylum or simply because an individual chooses not to.

If they are not registered with a GP, NHS regional teams, working with various appropriate local systems will contact unregistered people to ensure they are offered the vaccine. The General Practice COVID-19 vaccination programme 2020/21 Enhanced Service Specification enables practices working within their Primary Care Network groupings from shared vaccination sites to vaccinate unregistered patients provided they are eligible for a vaccination.

Richard Fuller:**[138911]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's policy is on the covid-19 vaccination priority for carers of children with SEN who are (a) in receipt of carers allowance and (b) not in receipt of carers allowance.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Eligible unpaid carers have been invited for vaccination as a part of cohort six of phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. This follows the advice the Joint Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination (JCVI).

There is no distinction in NHS England and NHS Improvement's standard operations procedure (SOP) between eligibility of those who are and are not, in receipt of carers allowance. The SOP is available at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/03/C1182-sop-covid-19-vaccine-deployment-programme-unpaid-carers-jcvi-priority-cohort-6.pdf

The SOP sets out a number of existing sources used by the National Health Service to identify unpaid carers as follows:

- Those in receipt of or entitled to a carer's allowance;
- Those known to general practitioners who have a 'carer's flag' on their primary care record;
- Those known to local authorities who are in receipt of support following a carer's assessment; and

- Those known to local carers organisations to be actively receiving care and support.

The JCVI's definition of an unpaid carer has been clarified in Public Health England's Green Book for COVID-19 as "carers who are eligible for carer's allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable".

Neil Coyle:

[142947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to work with medical research organisations to increase capacity to deliver the covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 January 2021]: There are no specific plans to do so. The capacity required for the successful vaccines programme in England is already provided by a network of local vaccination services, pharmacies, hospital hubs and large scale vaccination centres.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [145010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on rolling out vaccinations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and if he will implement more late night and early morning vaccination services, with subsidies for overtime and late shifts as required.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 2 February 2021]: Currently there are no plans to open vaccination sites 24 hours a day. However, we are keeping this under review based on patient and staff feedback.

We previously piloted an extended hours service in community pharmacy led vaccination sites in key locations in England, operating an extended hours service from 5am to 8am and 8pm to 1am. This was a very small pilot with limited data and for a very short period of time. However, it is recommended that regional teams encourage pharmacy local vaccination sites to offer more flexible hours/appointment schedules outside of the 8am to 8pm period if a trial shows there is local demand. Under current contractual terms, this would be opt-in for the contractor but may be attractive due to potentially minimising impact on provision of other pharmaceutical services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will continue to test extended opening hours, including 24-hour provision.

Mr Mark Harper:

[R] [146801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using closed hospitality venues that are equipped with commercial grade refrigeration for the storing and distributing of vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 4 February 2021]: There are currently no plans to make a specific assessment NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work to ensure that appropriate freezer and refrigeration capacity is in place to maintain the required cold-chain for COVID-19 vaccination deployment across England.

Should venue owners have sites which they wish to put forward for use by the Programme, submissions may be made to the Vaccine Taskforce and in conjunction with regional and local teams, an assessment of the offer will then be made.

Claudia Webbe:[\[148954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he made of the World Health Organisation's recommendations that two covid-19 vaccination doses should be administered within 42 days when deciding that the UK's limit should be extended to 84 days.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Interim recommendations issued by the World Health Organization on 10 February 2021 on the use of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine concluded that vaccine efficacy tended to be higher when the interval between doses was longer, together with the finding of higher antibody levels with increasing inter-dose interval. This supports the conclusion that longer dose intervals are associated with greater vaccine efficacy.

The decision to extend the dosing interval in the United Kingdom was based on a range of scientific and public health input and evidence. This included the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the UK Chief Medical Officers. Experts concluded that the best way to save lives with a limited supply of vaccine was to prioritise the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list, to protect the greatest number of at-risk people in the shortest possible time.

Emma Hardy:[\[150915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to include nursery practitioners amongst occupations prioritised in the first phase of the covid-19 vaccination roll out.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccines the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. For the first phase, the JCVI has advised that the vaccine be given to care home residents and staff, as well as frontline health and social care workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and clinical risk factors. The JCVI identified that the vaccination of frontline healthcare workers as a priority because these staff are at high risk of acquiring COVID-19 infection but also of transmitting that infection to multiple persons who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 as well as to other staff in a healthcare environment.

If early years workers are captured in phase one due to their age or clinical risk factors they will be prioritised. However, the Government, as advised by the JCVI, are not considering vaccinating early years workers as a phase one priority at this stage. Prioritisation decisions for next phase delivery are subject to of the surveillance and monitoring data and information from phase one, as well as further input from independent scientific experts such as the JCVI. Phase two may include further reduction in hospitalisation and targeted vaccination of those at high risk of exposure and those delivering key public services.

Jim Shannon:

[159301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to recent MS register survey data indicating that three quarters of people said they would benefit from more advice that the covid-19 vaccine is safe, whether he has had discussions with relevant professionals on the safety of that vaccine for people with multiple sclerosis.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is advised on the safety and efficacy of vaccines for the population as a whole and for those with a range of conditions, such as multiple sclerosis (MS), by independent scientists, including those from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and the Commission on Human Medicines Expert Advisory Group.

The Department and its partners also work closely with stakeholders from the scientific community and provide regular updates to all our stakeholders on the COVID-19 vaccine programme, to support them with their own communications about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines. The Department chairs a regular meeting with United Kingdom patient support charities to discuss COVID-19 vaccine programme, which has previously been attended by Nick Moberly, Chief Executive of the MS Society. The agenda for these meetings has includes vaccine efficacy and safety for the range of patient groups represented.

Bill Esterson:

[166402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason people aged 56 years and over but not people aged 55 years have been invited for a covid-19 vaccination in group 8.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 15 March 2021]: Within each priority group recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation for COVID-19 vaccine prioritisation, NHS England and NHS Improvement take operational decisions on how to ensure the vaccination process runs smoothly and efficiently. With the cohort of those aged 55 to 59 years old, were opened first to the older age group within that cohort. As a result of this staggered approach, 56 year olds were provided access before 55 year olds.

Duncan Baker:

[\[181447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to (a) the definition of severe asthma set out in paragraph 1.2 of the NICE 2020 publication, COVID-19 rapid guideline: severe asthma and (b) the article by Bloom et al published in The Lancet on 4 March 2021, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of prioritising all asthmatics in (i) phase 2 and (ii) future phases including booster shots of the covid-19 vaccine rollout; and whether the JCVI considered the NICE guidelines on covid-19 and severe asthma when setting out the approach to covid-19 vaccination roll out in the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) considered data from OpenSAFELY and QCOVID in determining the risk of COVID-19 in those with asthma and in determining which individuals with asthma were at significant risk of mortality from COVID-19 in phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The JCVI concluded that only a subset of those with asthma are at clinically higher risk from COVID-19. This group is defined by data from OpenSAFELY and QCOVID as adults with asthma who require continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guideline Bloom et al were not used.

For phase two, the JCVI concluded that there is good evidence that the risks of hospitalisation and critical care admission from COVID-19 increase with age. The JCVI advised that the offer of vaccination during phase two is age-based starting with the oldest adults first. The JCVI has not advised prioritisation of any sub-groups and is currently considering the need for and timing of future phases and booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Their advice will be published in due course.

Navendu Mishra:

[\[182107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2019 to Question 166586 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, since the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised that local teams should consider a universal offer to adults experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping alongside people in priority group six, how many homeless people in the UK have received a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Data is not available in the format requested.

Janet Daby:

[\[183285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent shortages of the Pfizer vaccine and ensure that people are able to book a second dose.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have sufficient doses to maintain our vaccination programme. We are in constant contact with the vaccine manufacturers, including Pfizer, and remain confident that

the supply of vaccine to the United Kingdom will not be disrupted. We are on track to meet our target to offer a vaccine to all adults by the end of July.

Vaccine supplies have already been set aside for everyone who has already received their first dose and there are currently no delays in the administration of the second dose of the vaccine. If an individual is invited for a COVID-19 vaccination via a general practitioner, a second vaccination appointment can then be offered to the patient in the following 12-week period.

Where a patient has been invited to book their own appointment, they will be required to book their second appointment in a time slot 11 to 12 weeks on from their first appointment. NHS England's guidance states that all vaccination centres should ensure that all second dose appointments are booked in by the twelfth week.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[184349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make covid-19 vaccines available to UK expatriates who are having difficulty acquiring those vaccines overseas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are currently no plans to do so. As a residence-based system, the National Health Service does not provide healthcare, including vaccinations, outside the United Kingdom. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are providing information through Travel Advice pages and 'Living In' guides on GOV.UK to inform British nationals of healthcare options available to them and how they can receive a vaccine locally.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Coronavirus

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[183070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 149725, on Department of Health and Social Care: Contracts, from how many companies his Department has reclaimed money in relation to covid-19 contracts.

Edward Argar:

This information is not currently collated and held centrally and to obtain it would involve disproportionate cost.

■ Disease Control

Jim Shannon:

[\[181273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the UK is prepared for future pandemics.

Jo Churchill:

The 2011 'UK Influenza Preparedness Strategy' contains objectives for coordinating a national response to an influenza pandemic, which has been assessed as and remains the greatest natural hazard risk on the National Risk Register of Civil

Emergencies. We continually review these plans will be incorporating lessons learned from COVID-19 to ensure our preparedness plans remain robust. The Government also established the UK Health Security Agency in April 2021 to protect the country from future health threats.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [184451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of drug misuse in (a) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and (b) the UK in each of the last 10 years.

Jo Churchill:

Drug misuse statistics for England and Wales are collected via the Crime Survey for England and Wales. The sample size is insufficient to estimate prevalence of drug misuse at lower geography levels, therefore prevalence of drug misuse statistics in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council are not available.

The Office for National Statistics' data on drug misuse in England and Wales for year ending March 2020 is available at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/drug-misuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>

Data for Scotland and Northern Ireland is not collected as this is a devolved matter.

■ Health and Life Expectancy: Disadvantaged

Gill Furniss:

[184524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve (a) life expectancy and (b) healthy life expectancy in the most deprived areas of England.

Gill Furniss:

[184525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made on the adequacy of public health provision in the most deprived areas of England.

Gill Furniss:

[184526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle discrepancies in life expectancy between the North and South of England.

Jo Churchill:

To support and drive local action to address inequalities, Public Health England, with the Association of Directors of Public Health and the Local Government Association, published an evidence-based resource Place Based Approaches for reducing health inequalities. This was produced to support cross-system action to address avoidable differences in health outcomes between populations and groups. We have a refreshed obesity strategy, are providing National Health Service health checks, have

a tobacco control plan in place and the world's first diabetes prevention programme. The NHS also funds national vaccination and screening programmes.

In March, we published 'Transforming the Public Health System: Reforming the Public Health System for the challenges of our times' which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-the-public-health-system>

This sets out our plans to reform the public health system by establishing a new Office for Health Promotion within the department, with professional oversight from the Chief Medical Officer. The Office will lead work across Government to promote good health and prevent illness.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Standards

Margaret Greenwood:

[175904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Integration and Innovation: Working together to improve health and social care for all White Paper, what assessment he has made of the number of unpaid carers who would be affected each year by the introduction of a legal framework for a Discharge to Assess model (a) in Wirral and (b) in England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 13 April 2021]: Unpaid carers play a vital role in the care of those for whom they provide care. In 2019-2020, Wirral local authority supported or assessed 970 unpaid carers. There were approximately 7.7 million adult unpaid carers aged sixteen and over in England in 2020. Under the Discharge to Assess model, people who are clinically ready are supported to return to their place of residence, where possible, where an assessment of longer-term needs takes place following recovery. Under this model, approximately 320,000 to 650,000 patients will be discharged home annually requiring minimal support from health and/or social care. All persons leaving hospital should receive a holistic welfare check to determine the level of support they need and should receive information about who they can contact if their condition changes. The crucial role of unpaid carers will be explicitly included in new guidance on hospital discharge.

■ Health Services: Interpreters

Vicky Foxcroft:

[174913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to support children who need to interpret for their parents during medical appointments.

Jo Churchill:

Appropriate interpreting services should be provided to all patients requiring them and responsibility for meeting patients' communication needs within the National Health Service rests with local providers. The NHS provides interpreting services to patients where applicable to ensure that patients are able to communicate effectively and appropriately with clinicians and other health service professionals.

NHS England's guidance on commissioning interpretation services in primary care states that children under 16 years old should never act as interpreters, due to serious concerns around Gillick competence and safeguarding. Their guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/guidance-for-commissioners-interpreting-and-translation-services-in-primary-care.pdf>

■ Health Services: Private Sector

Zarah Sultana: [182103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2021 to Question 159370, what financial support has been made available to privately-run medical and dental clinics.

Jo Churchill:

Private dental and medical practices who meet the HM Treasury criteria can access the full range of support as any other individual.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Alex Norris: [181095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Scottish Government on the use of digital cards to replace paper Healthy Start Vouchers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: Departmental officials and colleagues in the NHS Business Services Authority, who are leading the work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme on behalf of the Department, continue to engage with the devolved administrations as the current scheme becomes digitised.

Alex Norris: [181097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total value of claimed Healthy Start Vouchers was in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Geraint Davies: [183049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to consult food retailers on the development and rollout of a new digital Healthy Start Voucher scheme.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [183064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has held with retailers on the development of a digital card scheme to replace the Healthy Start Voucher scheme.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority is leading work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme, on behalf of the Department, to facilitate families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits. The NHS Business Services Authority has been engaging with retailers directly through regular showcase demonstrations and round table discussions hosted by the Food Foundation.

Geraint Davies:[\[183050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total value was of claimed Healthy Start Vouchers in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The total value of claimed Healthy Start vouchers in England for the most recent year for which data is available, 2019/20, was £44,838,141.

Sir Mark Hendrick:[\[183078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the potential effect on voucher uptake of introducing a digital card scheme to replace the existing paper Healthy Start Vouchers.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Business Services Authority are leading work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme.

There will be several benefits achieved with the move to a fully digitised system which include greater flexibility to individual families by removing the requirement for the full value to be spent in a single transaction, which is currently the case with paper vouchers and a reduction in the stigma associated with paper vouchers.

■ Hospitals: Food**Bob Blackman:**[\[185859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that hospital patients from the Jewish community are being served fresh Kosher foods, particularly at breakfast, that allow a choice at mealtimes without compromising on the strict dietary laws that they must follow.

Edward Argar:

The independent review of National Health Service hospital food was published on 20 October 2020 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-nhs-hospital-food>

This includes steps to improve hospital food for patients, staff and visitors, including religious requirements. An expert group is being assembled to implement the recommendations of this report and this will have a sub-group to look at how food is best provided to patients given their medical conditions, personal or cultural

preferences and religious requirements. This sub-group will include representatives from religious organisations.

■ Hospitals: Parking

Layla Moran: [\[183273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 176020 on Hospitals: Parking, at what stage in the Government's roadmap for the easing of covid-19 restrictions he plans to reintroduce car parking charges for NHS staff working at NHS hospitals in England.

Layla Moran: [\[183274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 176020 on Hospitals: Parking, how much notice in days he plans to provide to NHS staff working at NHS hospitals in England prior to the reintroduction those car parking charges.

Layla Moran: [\[183275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 176020 on Hospitals: Parking, what criteria will inform his decision to reintroduce car parking charges for NHS staff working at NHS hospitals in England as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: Any such assessment of the reintroduction of car parking charges will be made once the pandemic abates. The Government has also committed that staff working night shifts will no longer have to pay for car parking from April 2021.

■ Humber, Coast and Vale Integrated Care System

Rachael Maskell: [\[184509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, where the diagnostic hubs will be located within the Humber Coast and Vale Integrated Care System footprint.

Rachael Maskell: [\[184510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what diagnostic tests will be carried out in the Diagnostic Hub available to York.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service is planning to launch 44 community diagnostic hubs this year, which will deliver over one million additional scans across CT, MRI, X-ray, echocardiogram, and ultrasound. The location and services of the hubs are not yet confirmed and will be decided by NHS regions and local integrated care systems (ICS).

In October 2020, Professor Sir Mike Richards published a review of diagnostic services. As recommended in this review, regions will work with ICSs and sustainable

transformation partnerships, diagnostic networks and primary care services to determine the location and configuration of services, based on the needs of the local population. The aim will be to provide the broadest range of services possible.

■ **Influenza: Vaccination**

Justin Madders:

[\[181041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many doses of flucelvax were administered from September 2020 to March 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested. The majority of vaccines were procured and managed locally therefore on doses administered by vaccines type is not available.

■ **Loneliness: Health**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[183077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 144608, on Loneliness: Health, whether his Department has plans to undertake an assessment of the effect of long-term isolation on health and well-being.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has no plans to do so.

■ **Medical Equipment: Northern Ireland**

Ian Paisley:

[\[183140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether medical devices benefit from the same grace period of medicines in terms of their transport to Northern Ireland from Great Britain; and what steps he is taking to ensure there are no interruptions to the supply of those devices to Northern Ireland.

Edward Argar:

Medical devices can continue to move into Northern Ireland without checks. Medical devices are goods marked with a conformity assessment marking – for example, the CE mark or UKCA mark, and are regulated under a different set of rules from medicines. As long as medical devices are compliant with the European Union acquis, they can be placed on the Northern Ireland market. Medical devices are not required to comply with the requirements of the EU Falsified Medicines Directive and they are not included in the grace period for medicines.

The Department, in consultation with the devolved administrations and Crown Dependencies, is working closely with the health and care system, suppliers and industry to put in place robust measures to help ensure the continued supply of medicines and medical devices to the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron: [\[178841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to (a) the letter of 6 January 2021 and (b) follow-up letters of 8 February and 8 March 2021 from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay regarding his constituent, reference JB30605.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 21 April 2021.

Dave Doogan: [\[184546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans respond to correspondence from the hon. Member for Angus of 23 February 2021, followed up on 25 March 2021 and 9 April 2021 on the covid-19 vaccine concerns, case reference DD3069 and DD3079.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 23 April.

John Penrose: [\[185825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 11 February and 17 March 2021 on behalf of constituent, Mrs Andrea Miller, on care home visiting.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 23 April 2021.

■ Mental Illness: Prescription Drugs

Jim Shannon: [\[181271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the prescription of antipsychotic drugs.

Jo Churchill:

General practitioners or other responsible clinicians should work with their patient and decide on the course of treatment, with the provision of the most clinically appropriate care for the individual always being the primary consideration.

■ Migrants: Coronavirus

Nadia Whittome: [\[179719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people who (a) are refugees, (b) have indefinite leave to remain, (c) have a temporary visa, such as a work or spouse visa, and (d) with no immigration status have been vaccinated against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: We do not collect this information. COVID-19 vaccinations are offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status and no immigration checks will be carried out.

■ NHS: Pay**Dan Carden:**[\[179419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential effect on the wider economy of a greater than 1 per cent pay rise for NHS staff.

Dan Carden:[\[179420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the wider economy of a pay rise greater than one per cent for NHS staff.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: The Department works closely with HM Treasury during the Pay Review Body process. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have discussed National Health Service pay throughout the pay round, including the Government's written evidence to the independent Pay Review Bodies.

The Government's evidence to the Pay Review Bodies sets out information on a range of factors, including the wider economic and fiscal context. We have asked the Pay Review Bodies, consisting of industry experts, for their recommendations which will be based on a comprehensive assessment of evidence from a range of key stakeholders, including NHS system partners and trade unions. As the Pay Review Bodies are independent, we cannot pre-empt their recommendations. We have asked the Pay Review Bodies to report in late spring and will carefully consider the recommendations when we receive them.

■ Obesity**Stuart Anderson:**[\[182098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Integrated Care Systems will be required to evaluate the effectiveness of local measures introduced to tackle obesity.

Jo Churchill:

Integrated care boards will be directly accountable for the spend and performance of the services they commission, including local measures to reduce obesity.

■ Phesgo

Navendu Mishra:

[\[182114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how widely the cancer treatment drug, Phesgo, has been rolled out; and whether Phesgo is being used for treatments at Stepping Hill Hospital.

Jo Churchill:

Phesgo has been funded for eligible patients through the National Health Service since 10 February 2021. There are no restrictions on which providers can prescribe Phesgo. It is therefore for clinicians, in discussion with their patients, to decide on the most appropriate treatment.

Patients with breast cancer at Stepping Hill Hospital are clinically managed by the Christie Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust has agreed to use Phesgo. Patients at the hospital should therefore begin receiving this treatment in the near future.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[184378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to review the list of conditions for exemption from prescription charges; and he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including (a) cystic fibrosis and (b) other life-long medical conditions in that list.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has no plans to review or extend the prescription charge medical exemptions list. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge and extensive arrangements are already in place to help people, including those with cystic fibrosis and other life-long medical conditions. To support those with the greatest need who do not qualify for an exemption, they can spread the cost of their prescriptions by purchasing prescription pre-payment certificates. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

■ Prisons: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[150876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the guidance issued to prison governors on (a) covid-19 vaccination roll-out in prisons for eligible groups set out by JCVI and (b) covid-19 vaccine reservation lists to prevent wastage of any remaining doses following the vaccination of eligible persons.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that prison governors should make every effort to ensure persons in detained settings are offered vaccination in line with the offer to the wider community according to their priority group. The JCVI's advice is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-the-health-and-social-care-secretary-on-covid-19-vaccination-phase-1-advice/letter-from-the-jcvi-to-the-health-and-social-care-secretary-on-further-considerations-on-phase-1-advice-1-march-2021>

Guidance was issued to NHS England and NHS Improvement Health and Justice Commissioners and Health and Justice healthcare providers on 22 March 2021 on next steps on uptake and supply. A copy of the letter is attached.

Attachments:

1. Vaccination Deployment [C1215 COVID-19 vaccination deployment in Detained Estate in England - next steps on uptake and supply.pdf]

■ **Prostate Cancer: Medical Treatments**

Craig Whittaker:

[179001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data (a) his Department and (b) NHS trusts are collecting in order to monitor interruptions to prostate cancer treatment for existing patients during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: No data on prostate cancer treatment interruptions during the COVID pandemic is collected.

The NHS Cancer Programme is currently establishing a task and finish group to review alterations and/or disruptions to care pathways, including services for those with prostate cancer, during the pandemic. The group will consider the most appropriate data sources with which to make this assessment.

Jim Shannon:

[180976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an estimate of how many men have not sought medical treatment for prostate cancer during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps his Department is taking to promote awareness of prostate cancer and encourage men who may have undiagnosed prostate cancer to seek treatment.

Jo Churchill:

No estimate has been made.

NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England are continuing to run the Help Us, Help You public awareness campaign. This campaign reinforces the message about the importance of seeking medical care during the COVID pandemic.

■ **Strokes: Medical Treatments**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[184488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made in the NHS Long Term Plan to achieve a tenfold increase in the proportion of stroke patients who receive a thrombectomy by 2022.

Jo Churchill:

The implementation of thrombectomy is part of a multi-year development programme to establish thrombectomy services across England. Thrombectomy is available in 22 centres, with another two non-neuroscience centres currently under development.

There are additional plans to increase the number of operators able to perform thrombectomy. Due to training requirements this is currently restricted to Interventional Neuroradiologists in England. Over the past two years there has been work undertaken with the General Medical Council to develop a credentialing programme which would enable acceleration of training to a wider cohort of medical professions such as radiologists, interventional cardiologists and neurosurgeons.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists**Rachael Maskell:**[\[184511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the potential merits of rationing elective surgery for patients (a) with a BMI over 30 and (b) who smoke in response to waiting lists in place for elective surgery.

Edward Argar:

It is for individual clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to make commissioning decisions based on the needs of patients in their area. Whilst CCGs can take into account relevant risk factors such as weight and smoking status when making decisions, they cannot implement blanket bans on particular patients, such as smokers, getting operations as this would be inconsistent with the NHS Constitution's sections on access to health services and National Health Service values.

Rachael Maskell:[\[184512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that all patients on elective waiting lists for (a) all cases, (b) 18 months and (c) 12 months or more are offered social prescribing to assist with the health and wellbeing of patients.

Jo Churchill:

In response to the pandemic, general practitioners are making use of social prescribing link workers to support patients to build resilience and take control of their health and wellbeing. As part of primary care teams, link workers are also supporting people to 'wait well' whilst they are waiting for elective care by connecting people to advice and support to help them manage their physical and mental health and address wider social issues that are affecting their physical and mental health, such as loneliness, finance or employment. Social prescribing is also part of a targeted NHS England and NHS Improvement initiative to use personalised care approaches to support elective waiting list management. Beginning with musculoskeletal pathways, this work is planned to be cascaded to all priority clinical programmes this year.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[180944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria are used to determine which countries are red listed for travel as a result of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) produces risk assessments of the spread of variants of concern internationally. These risk assessments cover a range of factors for each country including assessment of surveillance and sequencing capability, available surveillance and genome sequencing data, evidence of in-country community transmission of COVID-19 variants, evidence of exportation of new variants to the United Kingdom or other countries and travel connectivity with the UK.

Decisions on 'red-listing' are taken by Ministers informed by evidence including the JBC's analysis as well as other relevant information about the risk of the spread of variant. The list of countries on the red list is kept under constant review.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[183242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing people to travel overseas to care for relatives during the covid-19 pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

Currently everyone leaving the country who is not exempt from the stay in the United Kingdom requirement needs to have a reasonable excuse for travel. However, the regulations include an express reasonable excuse for travelling abroad where it is reasonably necessary to provide care and assistance to a vulnerable person. This includes if the person is 70 years old or over, pregnant or has an underlying health condition.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Kate Osamor:

[\[169923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the maximum monthly payment is for people who are using the deferred repayment plan to pay for the managed quarantine charge.

Jo Churchill:

The deferred repayment plan requires payment of instalments over 12 months. There is no maximum monthly payment.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation****Dan Carden:**[\[184536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what comparative cost benefit analysis her Department has made of the respective cost to the public purse of continuing to provide temporary accommodation to failed asylum seekers under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and the effect of not providing such accommodation on the effect on street homelessness.

Chris Philp:

Failed asylum seekers and other migrants unlawfully present in the UK are not eligible for mainstream welfare and housing benefits. Accommodation is available under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, but only where the individuals are taking reasonable steps to leave the UK or there is a practical or legal obstacle preventing their departure. Failed Asylum Seekers should leave the UK and return to their country of origin - support will be given to them to do that via voluntary return or we will seek an enforced return. No assessment has been made of the impact of changing the legislation so that failed asylum seekers are provided with accommodation without these conditions, but the cost to the public purse is likely to be extremely high, particularly as such a policy is very likely to encourage unfounded asylum applications and there would be little incentive for the individuals to leave the UK when their claims are rejected.

■ British Nationality: Children**Mohammad Yasin:**[\[185448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to complete the review into child citizenship fees following the Court of Appeal February 2021 ruling that the current rate is unlawful.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has acknowledged the Court of Appeal's judgment and has committed to reviewing the child citizenship registration fee in line with its duties under Section 55. This review is on-going and the results will be published in due course

■ British Nationality: Children in Care**Layla Moran:**[\[184542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons local authorities are required to pay £1000 to register a child in their care for UK citizenship.

Kevin Foster:

Fees have been set taking account of the criteria set by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, passed under the coalition government, which include: the cost of processing the application, the benefits and entitlements provided by a successful

application and the wider cost of the BICS system. Full details of which can be reviewed via the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>

The Home Office keeps fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensures they are within the parameters agreed with Parliament.

There are several exceptions to application fees in the United Kingdom which protect the most vulnerable, including for young people who are in the care of a local authority. As such, there is a fee exception for indefinite leave to remain for children in local authority care.

■ **Deportation: Vietnam**

Holly Lynch: [\[185434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are set to be deported via the charter flight to Vietnam scheduled for 21 April 2021.

Holly Lynch: [\[185435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any of the people onboard the deportation flight to Vietnam scheduled for 21 April 2021 have been through the National Referral Mechanism.

Holly Lynch: [\[185436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that none of the people set to be deported via the charter flight to Vietnam scheduled for 21 April 2021 have been subjected to exploitation in the UK and have a right to remain in the UK.

Holly Lynch: [\[185437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that people set to be deported on the charter flight to Vietnam scheduled for 21 April 2021 have received appropriate legal advice.

Holly Lynch: [\[185438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether one of the people due to be deported on the charter flight to Vietnam scheduled for 21 April 2021 has made a legal submission on the grounds of being a potential victim of trafficking; and what the outcome was of that legal submission.

Chris Philp:

Every week we remove people who have no right to be here from the UK to different countries. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have continued to return and deport foreign national offenders and other immigration offenders where flight routes have been available to us, both on scheduled flights and charter flights.

The Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery and ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to rebuilt their lives.

Each and every person on the flight had the appropriate opportunity to raise any representations which were carefully considered and responded to in accordance with published policy. All individuals on a charter flight have opportunities for legal advice and the UK only ever returns those who both the Home Office and, where appropriate, the courts are satisfied do not need our protection and have no legal basis to remain in the UK.

This Government's priority is keeping the people of this country safe, and we make no apology for seeking to remove dangerous foreign criminals and other immigration offenders.

■ Home Office: Contact Tracing

Chris Green: [\[182058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on future uses of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Kevin Foster:

Use of the Test and Trace system is discussed periodically at cross departmental meetings as part of the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Layla Moran: [\[184540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that children born to parents with EU settled status residing in the UK will not be deported when residing in the UK themselves.

Kevin Foster:

Any child who is born in the UK to parents with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) will automatically be a British Citizen at birth.

If a child is born in the UK to parents with pre-settled status under the EUSS, the parents will be able to apply, free of charge, on behalf of the child for status under the EUSS in order to confirm their rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements.

Layla Moran: [\[184541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking (a) to ensure local authorities apply to the EU Settled Status scheme on the behalf of children in their care and (b) where local authorities have failed to make that application.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is committed to engaging with local authorities as they undertake their responsibilities to ensure all eligible looked after children and care leavers are supported to make an application to the EUSS. The Home Office will ensure caseworkers liaise with and support applicants to get the status they deserve.

Our engagement includes direct communications with social workers, and those making applications on behalf of looked after children, children in care and care leavers to provide support and information. We will also work with supporting organisations to assist with the evidence which could be provided and apply evidential flexibility where possible.

To monitor the progress local authorities are making with this important work, last year the Home Office contacted Directors of Children's Services to ask them to take part in a survey to help us better understand the numbers of EU children in looked after care and care leavers who may be eligible to apply for the EUSS. A follow up survey has since been issued, and the details of both surveys can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-home-office-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-survey-2020>

Provisional data from survey returns up to 25 March 2021 indicate a 99% response rate so far, with over 65% of eligible children having applied to the EUSS (up from 46% at the end of November 2020). A final report and supporting data will be published later in May 2021.

This information is vital to help us support social workers and council officers and plan for the final months before the application deadline. Using the data from the survey, the Home Office has delivered workshops, guidance, targeted engagement and direct communications with local authorities responsible for children's services.

The Home Office remains focused on ensuring all eligible children in care apply in time. It is recognised however, this vulnerable cohort can change over time, with new children coming into care. We are therefore committed to working with Local Authorities to ensure this work continues after the deadline.

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreement, there remains scope, indefinitely, for a person eligible for status under the EUSS to make a late application to the scheme where there are reasonable grounds for their failure to meet the deadline applicable to them. We have now published guidance for caseworkers on reasonable grounds for making a late EUSS application, which includes where a local authority has failed to make an application on behalf of a child in their care and where a parent or legal guardian failed to apply on behalf of someone aged under 18.

The guidance, which reflects our engagement with stakeholders on this issue, is not exhaustive and all cases will be considered on a flexible and pragmatic basis in light of their particular circumstances.

You can find the guidance at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-caseworker-guidance>

Layla Moran:

[\[184543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to provide an appeal mechanism for EU citizens residing in the UK whose applications for (a) pre-settled status and (b) full-settled status have been refused.

Kevin Foster:

We have already been providing such a mechanism for over a year.

Since 11pm on the 31 January 2020, anyone who makes an application under the EU Settlement Scheme and is refused pre-settled or settled status has a right of appeal against the decision.

■ Migrants: Taxation

Afzal Khan:

[\[182096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174258 on Immigration: Disclosure of Information, if she will publish the (a) Partnership Agreement, (b) Data Usage Agreement and (c) any relevant Memorandum of Understanding between HMRC and her Department.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not routinely publish copies of its data sharing agreements or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with other Government Departments or other bodies.

All Home Office data sharing activity is in line with the UK Data Protection and other relevant legislation and in line with government security guidance. When required and in line with the ICO code of practice on data sharing the Department will write and agree a data sharing agreement/MoU to regulate and govern this data sharing.

These agreements will vary depending on the type of data being shared, the purposes for which is being shared and who it is being shared with.

The Home Office has a large number of such agreements including the agreements referred to in this question, however these are not routinely published.

■ Pakistani High Commission: Demonstrations

Jim Shannon:

[\[185884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the recent Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan protests outside the Pakistan High Commission in London.

Kit Malthouse:

The public order measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will improve the police's ability to manage highly disruptive protests, enabling them to balance the rights of protesters against the rights of others to go about their daily business.

The management of protests and the use of public order powers is an operational matter for the police.

■ **Passports: Deed Poll**

Rob Roberts:

[\[185499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals have applied for a passport in each of the last five years using an unenrolled deed poll as proof of name change.

Kevin Foster:

Information relating to the evidence provided for a passport applicant's change of name is not held in a reportable format. The information requested could therefore only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Radicalism: Graffiti**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[178635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of far-right graffiti and stickers in public places; and what steps she is taking to tackle that graffiti.

Kit Malthouse:

Addressing visible signs of crime and anti-social behaviour such as graffiti helps to improve public perceptions of local environmental quality. In 2018, the Government almost doubled the maximum fixed penalty that local authorities can issue for offences related to graffiti to £150 and increased the default to £100. For more serious offences, such as racist or otherwise abusive graffiti, prosecution may be more suitable. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs set out in its recent guidance on enforcement against littering and related offences that enforcement action must be proportionate and in the public interest.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 also introduced a range of flexible tools and powers that the police, local authorities and other local agencies can use to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour, including graffiti. It is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate in the specific circumstances as those who work within, and for, local communities will be best placed to understand what is driving the behaviour in question, the impact that it is having, and to determine the most appropriate response.

We are clear that the far right has absolutely no place in Britain, and the British people overwhelmingly reject the prejudiced rhetoric and against our values of decency, tolerance and respect. We are committed to tackling those who, based on extreme right wing or any other ideology, promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism.

■ Road Traffic Offences: Fines

Mark Pritchard:

[184402]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to expand the powers of police community support officers to be able to impose fines for minor traffic violations.

Kit Malthouse:

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 allows chief officers of police to designate their staff with powers they consider necessary in their force areas. It also enables chief officers to designate PCSOs directly with the necessary traffic powers that constables have to deal with low level motoring offences. How these powers are designated is an operational matter for chief officers in conjunction with local policing plans.

■ Sexual Offences

Chi Onwurah:

[179109]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2021 to Question 169852, on Sexual Offences, how a report of sexually explicit spam can be made on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO); and to what volume of those reports the ICO is able to respond.

Kit Malthouse:

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for investigating email spam direct marketing and has recently launched a reporting tool to make reporting spam emails easier, including unsolicited adult content emails. If an individual receives sexually explicit spam, they should consider making a report to the ICO on their website and selecting 'adult content'. The online form is available at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/nuisance-calls-and-messages/spam-emails/report-spam-emails/>

Where a complaint or series of complaints are received that relate to direct marketing, and where sufficient information has been provided to assess whether a potential breach of the legislation has taken place, the ICO will use the intelligence gathered to direct its investigation. Complaints made to the ICO must meet this threshold in order for a proportionate investigation to be undertaken, and we would expect them to do so where a reasonable case exists. However, the ICO can only investigate concerns about marketing emails from identifiable UK senders and not from those outside of the UK. International collaboration agreements are in place with a number of overseas bodies to cooperate and exchange information to try and stop spam emails, including sexually explicit spam, being sent from those countries.

■ Travel Requirements: Families

Hilary Benn:

[184360]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the correspondence between his Department and the hon. Member for Leeds Central on document GWF053988543, for what reason the documents (a) in respect of that

constituency case have not been issued enabling the family member to join her family in the UK and (b) were not issued back in December 2019.

Chris Philp:

Our aim is to conclude applications for an European Economic Area (EEA) family permit or an EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) family permit as soon as possible after identity and supporting documents are submitted. More information can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk#if-you-want-to-join-family-in-the-uk>

Application GWF053988543 was delayed due to a technical error in printing and the subsequent automatic purge of the applicant's biometric data. This has been prioritised for a print request and dispatch within the next 24 hours.

The Visa Application Centre will be in contact with the applicant to arrange collection once they have taken receipt of the document.

The Home Office would like to offer sincere apologies to your constituent's daughter for the delay in receiving their EEA family permit.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

Tom Hunt:

[\[183299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to intercept boats crossing the English channel before the arrival of those boats onshore.

Chris Philp:

These are dangerous and unnecessary crossings, which are often illegally-facilitated and which we are determined to end. We are working closely with the French to prevent these crossings and to go after the criminality that profits from them.

Those efforts have seen numbers of gendarmes reservists doubled, enabling wider ranging deployment. Technology and intelligence capabilities are also being used to prevent crossing attempts and to inform operational responses on beaches and inland. Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) is paramount in the approach taken by both ourselves and the French once migrant vessels are at sea. The French continue to stop the majority of those attempting to cross, and over twice as many crossings have been prevented so far in 2021 compared to the same point in 2020.

■ **Visas: Australia**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[185456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with her Australian counterpart on new reciprocal visa access.

Kevin Foster:

As part of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks with Australia, led by the Department for International Trade, Home Office officials have been involved in discussions in line with the government's published objectives for a UK-Australian

FTA on enhanced opportunities for business travel, and Australian proposals on other aspects of UK-Australian mobility, including youth mobility.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Art Works

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what accountability structures exist for the (a) installation and (b) maintenance of public artwork.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring a full public consultation before public artwork can be installed.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of giving local authorities more powers to stop public artwork being installed on private property.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of requiring planning permission from local authorities before large public artwork can be installed.

Christopher Pincher:

Any large outdoor public artwork, such as a sculpture or statue, which is installed on a permanent or long term temporary basis is likely to require planning permission.

Public consultation will be required as part of the planning application process. Local planning authorities also have a range of enforcement powers available to them to address the instalment of public artworks which do not have planning permission.

■ British National (Overseas): Northern Ireland

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[185295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that potential applicants through the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route are provided with information on the opportunities of locating in Northern Ireland.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to encouraging settlement of Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) in all parts of the United Kingdom.

To achieve this, we are setting up new Hong Kong-UK Welcome Hubs across the UK, including in Northern Ireland. Activities may include working with local

government, civil society and Devolved Administrations to promote opportunities for relocation. Welcome Hubs will be given resources to develop activities and support for their own areas.

Funds have also been provided through the Barnett Formula of over £1 million for this year to support Hong Kong BN(O) status holders who choose to settle in Northern Ireland.

MHCLG has also released a Welcome Pack in English and Cantonese with links to resources in the Devolved Administrations. We will continue to grow this resource to ensure that Hong Kong BN(O) status holders are made aware of opportunities across the UK.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Catherine West:

[\[181078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2021 to Question 156609 on Buildings: Fire Prevention, what actions resulted from the March 2021 roundtable with insurers to support people living in buildings where cladding or other fire safety issues have resulted in an increase to their building insurance premiums.

Christopher Pincher:

We are working closely with the insurance industry to understand the drivers of recent price changes and how they are pricing risks. We are considering a number of options that have been proposed by industry which could help us address these issues.

Navendu Mishra:

[\[181132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to implement a time limit for building owners to carry out EWS assessments on buildings under 18 metres.

Christopher Pincher:

All multi-occupancy residential buildings should have an up-to-date fire risk assessment which includes the external wall system. In view of the forthcoming Fire Safety Bill, building owners should ensure their buildings are promptly assessed.

The EWS1 valuation process is not a Government or regulatory requirement, therefore the Government has no intention to legislate on its delivery.

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[184584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what protections are in place for leaseholders in buildings eligible for Government assistance to remediate defective cladding whose owners decide not to apply and to charge leaseholders for the work instead.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been very clear that it is the responsibility of the building owner, landlord or responsible person to ensure the safety of residents in buildings with unsafe cladding systems. We expect building owners and landlords to pursue all avenues to fund the remediation costs for unsafe cladding without passing on costs to leaseholders, by meeting these costs from their own resources, by claiming on insurance policies or warranties, or taking legal action. Where this is not possible the Government is making an unprecedented £5 billion available to fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres and over in England. Building owners and landlords should therefore not be seeking to charge leaseholders for the costs of remediation of unsafe cladding on buildings that are eligible for Government funding and should instead apply for the funding.

Coastal Communities Fund**Peter Aldous:**[\[182043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has for the Coastal Communities Fund.

Luke Hall:

Whether there will be another round of the Coastal Communities Fund or the Coastal Revival Fund is a matter for the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

The Government is committed to levelling up all parts of the UK. We published a prospectus at Budget for the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund which will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. In addition, as announced at Spending Review 2020, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and for people who face labour market barriers. We will publish a UK-wide investment framework for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund later this year and confirm multiyear funding profiles at the next Spending Review.

The Government is supporting coastal communities to recover from the pandemic. On 20 March we announced a new £56 million Welcome Back Fund to support a safe and successful reopening of our high streets and seaside resorts, giving people the reassurance that they can shop and socialise in a COVID-secure way. This builds on the £50 million Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) announced on 25 May 2020, doubling local authority funding allocations and significantly increasing the scope of eligible activity.

Council Tax**Kate Hollern:**[\[184472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the change in the level of the council tax base

in 2020-21; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that change on the Government's estimate in the Local Government Financial Settlement for 2021-22.

Luke Hall:

For the purposes of estimating Core Spending Power in presenting the annual Local Government Finance Settlement, each local authority's average annual tax setting base over the previous five years is used to project its tax base for the coming financial year. No adjustments were made to this methodology in the 2021-22 settlement to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because the Government is providing additional support to local authorities through the £670 million Local Council Tax Support grant, in recognition of the impact of anticipated increased local council tax support caseloads.

The Government also recognises that council tax yields may have been reduced during 2020-21 as a result of COVID-19. This is why we are compensating councils for 75% of irrecoverable council tax losses from 2020-21 through the tax income guarantee.

■ **Free Zones**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[184438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had on freeport policy with representatives from (a) PD Ports and (b) the Mubadala Investment Company since September 2020.

Luke Hall:

Ministerial meetings with external organisations are regularly published on Gov.uk.

Andy McDonald:

[\[184466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether freeport applications are assessed under (a) Criteria D and (b) Criteria E of Section 5.6 of the bidding prospectus for the use of supply chain finance schemes; and if he will list any successful freeport bids to date which contained plans to rely upon such schemes.

Andy McDonald:

[\[184470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether any of the successful freeport bids announced on 3 March 2021 rely on supply chain finance schemes to deliver its objectives.

Luke Hall:

All bids were assessed against the assessment criteria set out in the Freeports Bidding Prospectus. For Criterion D, bidders were assessed on the deliverability of their proposal effectively at pace. For Criterion E, bidders were assessed against their proposals ability to demonstrate a high level of private sector involvement.

Andy McDonald:

[\[185388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department and HM Treasury's policy paper, Freeports bidding

prospectus, updated on 8 April 2021, what the (a) date and (b) attendees were of the formal moderation sessions chaired by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Freeports programme in his Department.

Luke Hall:

Formal moderation sessions took place the week commencing 15 February 2021 and involved officials with expertise in Trade and Investment, Innovation, Regeneration and Development, Business Cases and Private sector Involvement, and Net Zero and Sustainability.

■ Free Zones: Tees Valley

Alex Cunningham:

[\[184437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Department of International Trade's press release, UAE and UK launch sovereign investment partnership with initial £1 billion in life sciences, published on 24 March 2021, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Sovereign Investment Partnership between the UK and the United Arab Emirates on (a) ownership and (b) trade union recognition within the Teeside Freeport to 2026.

Luke Hall:

We were clear in the Freeports Bidding Prospectus that the Government remains committed to ensuring its Freeport model maintains the UK's high standards with respect to security, safety, workers' rights, data protection, biosecurity and the environment, while ensuring fair and open competition between businesses.

Andy McDonald:

[\[184468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support officials in his Department have provided to the Tees Valley Mayor in discussions with investors on the takeover of PD Ports' facilities in the Tees Freeport.

Luke Hall:

Officials in my Department are in ongoing discussions with the successful locations announced at Budget. These discussions are focused on agreeing Governance arrangements and assisting these locations to further develop their proposals in the lead up to the submission of their Outline and Full Business Cases. As Freeports Policy incorporates a vast range of policy levers, officials within other Government Departments will also be involved in discussions with the successful locations.

Andy McDonald:

[\[184469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Tees bid for freeport status included plans to fully automate Teesport.

Luke Hall:

We were clear in the Freeports Bidding Prospectus that our key policy objectives for Freeports are to establish Freeports as national hubs for global trade and investment across the UK; to promote regeneration and job creation; and to create hotbeds for

innovation. The English Freeports Selection Decision-Making note makes clear how bids, including Teesside's proposal, scored against these criteria. Any questions regarding the specific content of the Teesside Freeport bid should be directed to the bidding coalition. Further information on the Teesside Freeport proposal can be found here: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/teesside-freeport/>.

■ Housing Associations: Complaints

Navendu Mishra:

[181144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many cases the Housing Ombudsman received in respect of housing associations not tackling items of disrepair and carrying out maintenance in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

Statistics on Housing Ombudsman cases are published annually in their Annual Report and accounts. These can all be found on the link below.

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/about-us/corporate-information/publications/>

■ Housing Infrastructure Fund

Thangam Debbonaire:

[185405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April to Question 181317, how much investment has been delivered by Homes England through the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund Forward Funding, by local authority.

Christopher Pincher:

Information regarding the Housing Infrastructure Fund is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>.

■ Housing: Cafes

Steve Reed:

[184462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 180511, on Housing: Cafes, when his Department plans to publish that impact assessment; and what form that impact assessment will take.

Christopher Pincher:

As we stated in our previous response, we aim to publish an impact assessment on the measures as soon as possible in accordance with the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015. It will be a full regulatory impact assessment.

Housing: Construction**Steve Reed:**[\[184463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2021, to Question 159023, on Housing: Construction, whether his Department has plans to collate data on how many premises have changed use to Class E since 1 September 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

We do not hold data on how many premises change use to Class E. Change of use within Class E does not require planning permission.

Housing: Insulation**Navendu Mishra:**[\[181133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recourse leaseholders have when a sale on their property falls through as a result of the building owner not undertaking an EWS assessment in a timely manner.

Christopher Pincher:

The EWS1 process is not a Government or regulatory requirement.

The Government is providing nearly £700,000 funding to RICS to train up to 2,000 assessors to undertake EWS assessments. So far over 700 professionals have enrolled.

Housing: Older People**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[185395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent targets his Department has set for the number of new homes designed specifically for older people.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, under which 10 per cent of delivery over the course of the programme will be used to increase the supply of much needed specialist or supported housing, including for older and disabled people. As set out in our National Planning Policy Framework, local authorities should already assess the types of specialist housing needed for older and disabled people in their areas, and that this should be reflected in their planning policies. We have also given councils guidance on options they should consider, such as housing with improved accessibility, so the most vulnerable get the support they need. The Government also recently consulted on options to raise the accessibility of new homes, recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people.

■ Local Government Finance

Steve Reed:

[\[185381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the actual spending power of English local government for the financial year 2021-22.

Luke Hall:

The Government has made available an increase in Core Spending Power in England from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms.

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Steve Reed:

[\[184465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support local government to play a full role in the Net Zero transition as recommended by the Committee on Climate Change in the Reducing UK emissions Progress Report to Parliament, published in June 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to tackling climate change, and local authorities have a vital contribution to make. Their unique insight into local opportunities and priorities, their role as place-shapers, and their convening power enable them to drive carbon emissions reductions and develop climate resilient services across their whole area, with co-benefits for better public health and thriving local economies

Tackling emissions at a local level will make an important contribution to the decarbonisation of transport, energy and buildings. As such, many parts of Government work closely with local government to deliver national strategies for carbon reduction effectively at the local level

In 2020 the Government launched the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. In March we announced a further £300 million under the Green Homes Grant, to help lower income households cut emissions and save money on bills: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-boosts-energy-efficiency-spending-to-13-billion-with-extra-funding-for-green-homes> The Local Energy programme also supports Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local authorities and communities in England to play a leading role in decarbonisation and clean growth. The Government's wider plan to work with local government to deliver national strategies for carbon reduction will be set out in our forthcoming net zero strategy

The Government will also publish a bold and ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will set out how to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport, and a Heat and Building Strategy setting out how local authorities can contribute to reducing emissions from household heating. Different decarbonisation

solutions will be required and will work best in different places across the UK, and we have engaged with local government at all levels in developing these strategies

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, now and over the course of the net zero transition.

■ Mubadala: PD Ports

Andy McDonald: [185386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the effect on existing (a) collective bargaining agreements and (b) employment in Teesport of an acquisition of PD Ports by the Mudabala Investment Company of Abu Dhabi.

Luke Hall:

The UK takes a voluntarist approach in relation to industrial relations. Collective bargaining is largely a matter for individual employers, their employees and their trade unions. It is for individual employers to decide whether they wish to recognise a trade union for collective bargaining purposes. Where an employer refuses to recognise a union, our trade union law provides for a statutory recognition procedure. This allows independent unions to apply to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) to be statutorily recognised for collective bargaining purposes. Unions that can demonstrate that they have majority support for recognition in the workplace will secure statutory recognition from the CAC. The UK's system is based therefore on the democratic wishes of workers in the workplace.

■ Permitted Development Rights: Public Consultation

Steve Reed: [185380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his oral contribution of 19 April 2021, Official Report, col 642, on Covid-19: Hospitality Venues and High Streets, what proportion of consultation responses supported his Department's proposed extension to permitted development rights to enable the change of use from the new Class E to residential use.

Christopher Pincher:

A summary of the responses to all of the questions asked in the consultation are available in the government's response at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure/outcome/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure-government-response>

■ Planning

Thangam Debbonaire: [181323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress the Government has made in implementing the 2019 National Design Guide.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Design Guide became planning practice guidance in 2019, meaning that it became a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The draft National Model Design Code expands on this guidance further, providing the tools for councils to produce local design codes in consultation with communities. We are currently considering responses to the consultation on the draft National Model Design Code and National Planning Policy Framework which closed on 27 March, and we will be announcing a way forward.

Supported Housing: Older People**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[185316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will respond to the open letter of 29 March 2021 sent to the Prime Minister calling on the Government to take steps to help increase the supply of housing-with-care provision for older people.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[185317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to work with the Department of Health and Social Care to expand housing-based care options for older people; and whether he is considering a cross-government Housing with Care Task Force to help deliver that expansion of options.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department has noted the open letter sent by the Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) to the Prime Minister on 29 March 2021. Housing-with-care has a vital role in enabling older people to live independently, with the necessary care and support available if required. Both the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are committed to further improving the diversity of housing options available to older people, including housing-with-care, and are engaging closely with the sector and a range of other stakeholders on this issue. This includes considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models including proposals from the sector for a cross-government taskforce.

Temporary Accommodation**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[184474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of families with children living in temporary accommodation in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in (i) each of the last five years and (ii) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Eddie Hughes:

Temporary Accommodation is providing vital support to ensure that those who are vulnerable are getting the necessary help and ensuring that no family is without a roof over their head.

Our most recent data shows that the number of households with children in B&Bs is at its lowest level since 2011. The data is broken down by local authority. On 31 December 2020 there were 255 households with children living in temporary accommodation in Coventry, 3,780 households with children living in temporary accommodation in the West Midlands and 59,670 households with children living in temporary accommodation in England.

The latest homelessness data for England, including historic data, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Disability**Florence Eshalomi:****[184585]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to support employment projects for disabled people through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Luke Hall:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities.

As set out at Spending Review 2020, one portion of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will support investment in people and skills, in communities and places and in local businesses, all tailored to local needs. A second portion of the Fund will be targeted differently to people most in need, through bespoke employment and skills programmes. This will support improved employment outcomes for those in and out of work in specific groups of people who face labour market barriers.

The Government will publish a UK-wide investment framework later this year.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Overseas Trade: Taiwan****Anthony Mangnall:****[185495]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to strengthen the UK's trade relationship with Taiwan.

Greg Hands:

The UK remains committed to strengthening its rich and wide-ranging trading relationship with Taiwan. Total trade in goods and services between the UK and Taiwan was £7.0 billion [in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2020]. We are working with Taiwan to increase this further, including through our annual Trade Talks,

ministerial engagement, and through engagements by the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Taiwan.

JUSTICE

■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

Chris Green:

[\[182062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on future uses of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Chris Philp:

No such discussions have taken place.

■ **Courts: Disability**

Stella Creasy:

[\[184435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities who do not have access to the internet at home in court hearings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

In response to the current pandemic, video hearings provide an additional channel for conducting a hearing. However, they may not be suitable for everyone. The decision to hold a hearing by video is for the judge, panel or magistrate, taking into account the needs of the parties, including any disability or difficulties with access.

Participants are asked to tell the court or tribunal if they need support or cannot participate effectively in the video hearing. The judiciary will consider reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements to ensure disabled users can participate. For a participant without access to the internet they can access a video hearing by telephone, or the judiciary may decide it's more appropriate to hold a face to face hearing.

The judiciary and HMCTS staff have access to reasonable adjustment guidance and training. All guidance raises awareness of the issues people may face, and the reasonable adjustments which may help them to fully participate in hearings.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Contact Tracing**

Chris Green:

[\[183178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

Chris Green:

[\[183179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to use the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Chris Philp:

No assessment has yet been made, nor any decisions made, on whether to use the data systems used by NHS Test and Trace for other purposes beyond those related to Covid-19. Any work to assess potential future uses of these data systems would be met from within the financial resources already allocated to NHS Test and Trace for the 2021/22 financial year.

■ **Pornography: Internet****Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[181351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking in response to the recommendations made by the Law Commission in February 2021 on improving protections for victims whose intimate images are taken or shared without their consent.

Chris Philp:

Activities involving the sharing of intimate images are captured by existing offences for example those tackling “revenge pornography”, harassment, malicious communications, blackmail, and “coercive or controlling behaviour”.

To further strengthen the law in this area the Government has announced it is to extend the “revenge pornography” offence to capture those who *threaten* to disclose such material. Provisions to extend the parameters of the offence in this manner were introduced in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

The provisions will come into force two months after Royal Assent.

However, the Government recognises that there is concern over the growth of new technology and the impact on the law in this area.

We have asked the Law Commission to review the law in this area to ensure victims are properly protected. The Law Commission published a public consultation to this review on 26 February this year, with a view to announcing findings later this year, which the Government will consider carefully.

The consultation period ends on 27 May and I should like to encourage people to take part in that important public engagement.

The Government awaits the Law Commission’s findings with interest.

■ **Prison Accommodation: Females****Bambos Charalambous:**[\[185455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many temporary accommodation cells were installed in the women's prison estate since April 2020 as part of the Government's plans to limit the spread of covid-19 in prisons.

Alex Chalk:

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 to limit the spread of covid-19 in the women's prison estate.

■ **Secure Schools: Medway**

Zarah Sultana:

[184562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the the application submitted by Oasis Charitable Trust to run Medway Secure School will be published on the secure schools page of GOV.UK; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Chalk:

We are unable to publish the Oasis application documents as had been intended as it has not been possible to produce it in an accessible format as required for all documents published on GOV.UK. A copy of the application and related documents in the form it had been intended to be published will be placed in the House library. We have made the document available on request as stated on the page providing guidance on secure schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secure-schools-how-to-apply>

The application submitted by Oasis in March 2019 outlined the foundation for their operating concept and proposed principles for the secure school, in line with the criteria set out in the secure schools 'how to apply' guide. Since they were approved as the successful applicant for the first secure school in July 2019, Oasis have continued to develop and refine their operating model. All policies submitted by Oasis were accurate for academic year 2018-19.

TRANSPORT

■ **Department for Transport: Rail Delivery Group**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[184383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 175761 on Department for Transport: Rail Delivery Group, if he will publish the minutes of meetings with representatives from the Rail Delivery Group.

Andrew Stephenson:

While minutes of meetings are not published, to enable Ministers and stakeholders to have space to have free and open exchange of views about developing policy, you can find information on the meetings between Ministers and representatives from the Rail Delivery Group on in the transparency returns on Gov.UK.

■ **Electric Scooters**

Kerry McCarthy:

[184375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals on electric scooters.

Rachel Maclean:

Trials are live in 31 areas and will shortly begin in London. The evidence gathered during the trials will inform whether e-scooters should be legalised in the future, and how we can ensure their use is as safe as possible. Until we have that evidence we cannot commit to a legislative timetable.

■ Electric Scooters: Global Positioning System**Rachael Maskell:**[\[185431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential of GPS on e-bikes and e-scooters to be used in enforcement to park or ride in permitted areas.

Rachel Maclean:

Operators of e-scooters in trial areas and some of the larger e-bike rental companies use geo-fencing technology, for example to encourage users to park in permitted areas with fines for non-compliance. In relation to e-scooters, geofencing is also used to slow down or stop the e-scooters when ridden in no-go or go-slow areas.

Use of geo-fencing is something we are gathering evidence about as part of national scooter trials. And it is something the department is continuing to engage with the cycle-share sector about.

■ Electric Scooters: Parking**Rachael Maskell:**[\[185432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the safe use and parking of e-scooters is being enforced by e-scooter pilot companies.

Rachel Maclean:

It is a requirement for all operators involved in the trials to provide training. This takes place in various forms – apps, training videos, face-to-face training – and makes clear to users where they should and should not ride and park. Operators are also using geo-fencing and dedicated parking bays and racking infrastructure to ensure parking is contained and well managed.

Officials have asked local areas and operators to ensure that trials are launched in a controlled way, with a small number of e-scooters and that trials are scaled up gradually as demand increases, and with a strong presence of 'brand ambassadors' on the streets to help with smooth running of the schemes.

E-scooter operators are also working with the police on this issue. Rental e-scooters in trial areas are made distinct through branding and colour scheme and have a unique reference number on each model to aid identification.

■ Free Zones: Tees Valley

Andy McDonald:

[184467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on (a) existing collective bargaining agreements and (b) local employment at Teesport of Mudabala's takeover of PD Ports.

Robert Courts:

The Department has not made any assessment on the potential effect on collective bargaining agreements or local employment at Teesport.

■ Hull Paragon Station: Domestic Visits

Dame Diana Johnson:

[184386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 174768 on Hull Paragon Station: Domestic Visits, whether the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Pendle has made any visits to Hull Paragon Station since February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

I have not made any visits to Hull Paragon Station. I look forward to visiting many stations when circumstances allow.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[183144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the requirement from 6 April 2021 for truck drivers to take a covid-19 test when they enter the UK, what steps will be taken in the event of a positive result.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport has been providing COVID testing for hauliers at its network of Information and Advice Sites since January 2021 following the introduction of French government requirement for hauliers to have a negative test result before crossing the border. Since then, over 435,000 hauliers have been tested with a positivity rate of 0.2%.

A weekly summary of testing volumes and the positivity rates can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/haulier-coronavirus-testing>.

The introduction of new testing requirements for hauliers in England on 6th April 2021 (requiring all hauliers operating in England for 48 hours or longer to be tested) is designed to limit the spread of COVID-19 in England. Suppressing imported cases of COVID-19 will mitigate the risks that Variants of Concern are introduced that may have greater transmissibility or potentially lesser susceptibility to vaccines. This is increasing important as domestic infection prevalence decreases and domestic restrictions are relaxed.

If a haulier tests positive for COVID-19, an additional PCR test is provided to the driver free of charge. If that is positive, they are instructed to self-isolate for ten days in accordance with the Government's self-isolation regulations. Depending on where the haulier is based, self-isolation can take place at a property of the haulier's choosing in the UK or in a Government-provided hotel at no cost to the haulier. Anyone travelling or living with the haulier is also required to self-isolate. After the ten days and providing they are free of COVID-19 symptoms, the haulier receives proof to show they have completed the isolation period and are then free to continue their journey.

■ **Ministers: Department for Transport**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[184382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 174765 on Ministers: Department for Transport, if he will publish minutes for the MPs surgery held by the Minister of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Pendle, on 24 March 2021.

Andrew Stephenson:

The MP surgery held on 24 March 2021 was a follow-up to the parliamentary report published on 23 March 2021. All MPs who were interested were able to attend. While minutes of meetings are not published, to enable Ministers and stakeholders space to have full and frank discussions about developments on the project, I presented on the report and took questions from MPs in attendance.

■ **Passengers: North of England**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[184384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 174770 on Passengers: North of England, if he will publish a list of stakeholders the Minister of State, the Hon. Member for Pendle has met since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Stephenson:

I have met with a large number of stakeholders since the start of covid-19 outbreak. The details of many of these can be found in the published Ministerial transparency returns on the GOV.UK website.

■ **Public Transport**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[185310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to increase the uptake of active travel and integrate micro-mobility into the public transport network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 28 July 2020 the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking in England, with a vision that half of all journeys in towns and cities are

cycled or walked by 2030. This includes an unprecedented £2 billion package of dedicated funding for active travel over 5 years. The first £250 million of the £2 billion was spent in the last financial year on a range of programmes including the Active Travel Fund and the “Fix your Bike” voucher scheme.

The Department has established 31 regional rental e-scooter trials to test the benefits, safety and wider impacts of this new mode and to inform future policy. As part of the set-up of the trials, local areas were asked to work with operators to ensure e-scooters were integrated into the transport system. Evaluation from trials across the year will help illustrate where this was most successful and why.

■ Railways: Electrification

Jane Stevenson:

[\[185492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for the further electrification of railway lines; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

1110 miles of track in Great Britain have been electrified for passenger traffic from 2010 up to March 2020, compared to 63 miles between 1997 and 2010. Further electrification of the network will play an important role in our plans to decarbonise the railway, alongside the deployment of battery and hydrogen trains on some lines. The Department's forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan will set out the government's ambition for the scale and pace of rail decarbonisation between now and 2050.

■ Railways: North of England

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[184385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 174771 on Railways: North of England, how many meetings the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Pendle has had on the Northern Powerhouse Rail programme since his appointment to that role.

Andrew Stephenson:

As minister for Northern Powerhouse Rail, I attend regular meetings on this topic. Details of meetings with external organisations are routinely published on the GOV.UK website.

■ Road Traffic Control

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[185311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2021 to Question 182022, what assessment he has made of the effect of each of those policies on road traffic levels.

Rachel Maclean:

These policies in relation to active travel, public transport and decarbonisation will be the subject of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. It is too early, and in the case of the forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan premature, to draw conclusions from such recent and long-term initiatives.

■ **Taxis: Finance****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[184410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (b) other Treasury Ministers and (c) officials of HM Treasury on the need for continued financial support for (i) the taxi trade and (ii) taxi drivers at risk of having their vehicles repossessed.

Rachel Maclean:

Throughout the pandemic, Department for Transport ministers and officials have engaged regularly with other Government departments, including the Treasury, to discuss issues faced by owners, operators and drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs).

The majority of taxi and PHV drivers are self-employed and can therefore apply for grants through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). Operators and drivers may also be eligible for other sources of support, including locally administered grant funding. An online support finder tool has been made available to help businesses and self-employed workers determine what support is available to them.

■ **Trains: Carbon Emissions****Jane Stevenson:**[\[185491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with train manufacturers on meeting net-zero carbon emission targets through the use of green technologies.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Departmental ministers and officials meet with train manufacturers regularly and discuss decarbonisation and our net zero target.

As well as recent meetings with individual manufacturers, on 22 April I have supported the establishment of the Sustainable Rail Executive, and on 28 April I will be giving a speech at the Rail Industry Association Innovation Conference, where rail decarbonisation will be a key theme.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Munira Wilson:**[\[183304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring suppliers of covid-19 testing under the Test to Release scheme to introduce a concessionary price.

Robert Courts:

The Test to Release (TTR) scheme is a voluntary, opt-in system allowing eligible people the opportunity to leave self-isolation early if they receive a negative result following a Day 5 test. Most travel is undertaken by choice and TTR is not a mandatory requirement. Those who do not wish to opt into this voluntary scheme are able to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

TREASURY**■ Adult Education: Finance****Karin Smyth:**[\[185417\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the (a) decision to clawback adult skills funding and (b) potential effect of that matter on further education providers.

Steve Barclay:

Treasury Ministers regularly meet with the Secretary of State for Education to discuss education funding.

I refer the honourable member to answers on this matter by Minister Keegan on 15 April 2021 and 20 April 2021.

■ Capital Allowances: Free Zones**Alex Cunningham:**[\[184441\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme intended to apply within Freeport tax sites is planned to be claimable on qualifying new plant and machinery purchased outside the UK.

Jesse Norman:

This Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme is designed to incentivise companies to invest in plant and machinery in freeport tax sites. There is no restriction specific to this scheme in respect of purchasing assets abroad. Qualifying plant and machinery purchased outside of the UK will be eligible for the Enhanced Capital Allowance for freeport tax sites. The main requirements in order to qualify for this relief are that such plant and machinery must be new, it must be primarily for use in a freeport tax site, and the relief is only available to companies within the charge to corporation tax with trading businesses or carrying on certain other activities. This Enhanced Capital Allowance will be available for qualifying expenditure incurred during the period from when the relevant freeport tax site is designated until 30 September 2026. As for

other capital allowances for plant and machinery, the expenditure must be incurred by the business carrying out the qualifying activity and the plant or machinery must be owned by that company or deemed to be owned by that company under the capital allowance rules.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Caroline Lucas:

[185337]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 25 Nov 2020 to Question 118562, what recent discussions he has had with the Financial Conduct Authority on the treatment of furlough payments to individual business employees during insurance companies' consideration of business interruption insurance claims; whether the same principles that form the Government's firm expectation that grants intended to provide emergency support to businesses during the covid-19 outbreak are not to be deducted from business interruption insurance claims apply to furlough payments; whether he is aware of differential treatment of furlough payments by different insurers, in their consideration of such claims; whether he is taking steps to ensure fair and consistent treatment as claims are considered; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

Insurers must treat customers fairly and firms are required to do so under the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) rules. The FCA has advised that all deductions from business interruption insurance settlements should be assessed on a case-by-case basis as policies differ significantly.

Insurers should calculate claims payments in accordance with the terms and conditions of the relevant policy. The FCA may intervene and take further actions where firms do not appear to be meeting their expectations.

■ Credit Cards: Fees and Charges

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[185284]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of (a) Mastercard and (b) Visa on the interchange fee levied on consumers buying from an EU-based company following the UK's departure from the EU.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-giftsand-overseas-travel>

The Government has legislated to ensure that interchange fees remain capped for UK domestic card transactions, where both the card issuer and acquirer are located in the UK, through the Interchange Fee (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

made under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. Any changes in cross-border interchange fees between the UK and EU, as between the UK and other third countries, are a result of commercial decisions by card schemes.

■ Credit Unions: Assets

Chris Stephens: [\[185424\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) discussions he has had with representatives of and (b) support he has provided to credit unions during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Stephens: [\[185425\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change credit union capital requirements to support credit unions to grow assets beyond £10 million; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Stephens: [\[185426\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on changing credit union capital requirements; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Stephens: [\[185427\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of discontinuities in credit union capital requirements on credit unions' capacity to grow assets beyond £10 million; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

HM Treasury officials have regularly engaged with the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the credit union sector. I have also engaged with representatives from the credit union sector through the Consumer Finance Forum and Financial Inclusion Policy Forum, which are bringing financial services and consumer group representatives together to discuss how to best support people through this period.

Fair4All Finance, the independent body set up by Government to distribute dormant assets funding to support financial inclusion, has set up a £5 million resilience fund to support credit unions and community development finance institutions in England during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 20 May 2020, the Government announced that additional funding through the dormant assets scheme would be released immediately to Fair4All Finance. This included an expanded Affordable Credit Scale-up Programme, which aims to improve the access and availability of affordable credit. I am also aware that credit unions have had access to wider COVID-19 support schemes, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and grant funding from local authorities.

Capital requirements for credit unions are a matter for the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA). In March 2020, the PRA concluded its consultation into simplifying the capital regime for credit unions. This reduced complexity by removing the link between a credit union's activities and membership with capital requirements,

removed the old 2% capital buffer, and introduced a graduated rate approach to capital requirements. These proposals were broadly supported by the credit union sector.

■ Cryptocurrencies

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[183307\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made on the Government's consultation on cryptocurrencies; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the scope of that consultation.

John Glen:

On 7 January HM Treasury published a consultation on the broader regulatory treatment of cryptoassets, with a focus on cryptoassets known as stablecoins. It also included a call for evidence on the use of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) in financial markets. This consultation has now closed. The Government is reviewing responses and will outline next steps in due course.

The Government's near-term priority is to ensure the framework supports the safe use of stablecoins. The Government continues to actively monitor emerging risks as this market continues to mature and stands ready to take further regulatory action if required.

The Government also issued a consultation last year on a proposal to bring certain cryptoassets into the scope of financial promotions regulation. This would ensure that relevant cryptoasset promotions are held to the same high standards for fairness, clarity and accuracy that apply to the financial services industry. The consultation is now closed, and the Government will be publishing its response in due course.

■ Debt: Telephone Services

Nick Smith:

[\[184412\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Money and Pensions Service's press release entitled Helplines forecast a call about debt every four minutes in January, published on 20 January 2021, what additional resources his Department plans to provide to ensure the sector is well-placed to scale up quickly to meet increased demand and additional need.

John Glen:

The Government recognises the importance of providing a strong financial footing for the debt advice sector and is committed to helping people access the support they need to get their finances back on track.

The Government has agreed to maintain record levels of debt advice funding for the Money and Pension Service in 2021-22, bringing the budget for free debt advice in England to £94.6 million. This is more than a 70% increase since 2019-20 and reflects the Government's commitment to ensure that appropriate support is available for people in problem debt, especially during this challenging time.

■ Finance: Coronavirus

Dan Carden:

[\[184537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 179434, if he will list the (a) finance industry and (b) business groups that were involved in the discussions referenced in that Answer; and if he will publish the minutes of those discussions.

Kemi Badenoch:

As set out in our previous response HM Treasury, BEIS and the British Business Bank (BBB) engaged with a range of stakeholders from the finance industry to ensure the covid loan schemes could efficiently deliver support to those businesses most in need of Government-backed finance. This included banks, building societies, non-bank lenders and trade associations.

Details of all ministerial meetings are published on the department's transparency returns.

■ Food: Manufacturing Industries

Dan Jarvis:

[\[185366\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support he is providing to food and drink manufacturers who are not eligible for the business rates relief schemes.

Kemi Badenoch:

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, the Government has protected people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK. Food and drink wholesalers have been eligible for a number of economic support schemes, including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme;
- Deferral of VAT payments due between 20 March and 30 June 2020; and
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme for small businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000, with no interest payments or fees for the first 12 months. This has now been succeeded by the Recovery Loan Scheme, which launched on 6th April 2021.

Wholesalers in England may also receive further support with their fixed costs from local authorities through the £2.1 billion in funding made available for discretionary Additional Restrictions Grants to support local businesses.

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

■ Free Zones: Tees Valley**Alex Cunningham:**[\[184440\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the annual cost to the public purse of reliefs granted in the Tees Freeport on (a) employers' national insurance contributions, (b) Stamp Duty Land Tax, (c) Enhanced Capital Allowance, (d) business rates and (e) Enhanced Structures Buildings Allowance to 2026.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has considered the costs of the tax reliefs that will be granted across each of the eight English freeport locations, including the Teesside Freeport. However, as a result of these tax reliefs applying only in tax sites agreed and confirmed by Government, estimates of their cost will be dependent on the final locations once agreed.

Bidders were required to submit initial proposals for their tax sites as part of their bids. The Government will outline the process for confirming tax sites in due course and expects to score the costs of tax reliefs at the next fiscal event. These costings will undergo the usual scrutiny from the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Andy McDonald:[\[185384\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support officials in his Department have provided to the Tees Valley Mayor in discussions with investors on the takeover of PD Ports' facilities in the Tees Freeport.

Steve Barclay:

Officials in HMT routinely meet with representatives of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Authorities as a core part of their work. The TVCA presented information to Treasury officials regarding PD Ports' facilities on two occasions in September last year. Treasury officials did not provide any support regarding this matter.

■ Gyms: Coronavirus**Ian Mearns:**[\[184423\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179033, on Coronavirus: Gyms, whether his Department has plans to introduce incentives similar to the Eat out to help out scheme for gyms and fitness facilities.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the significant disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors like the fitness industry.

During this difficult time the Treasury is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups and other government departments to understand the long-term effects of social distancing across all key areas of the economy.

The Chancellor has already announced unprecedented support for individuals and businesses, to protect against the current economic emergency. By the end of March

2021, the Government made up to £20 billion available for business grants. At Budget 2021, the Government announced a further £5 billion of business grant support, including the Restart Grants Scheme, in which hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business premises in England will be eligible for grants up to £18,000, subject to their rateable value. The Restart Grants will replace the monthly Local Restrictions Support Grant and Local Restrictions Support Grant, which both closed at the end of March.

There are no current plans to introduce incentives like the Eat Out to Help Out scheme for gyms and fitness facilities. We will continue to monitor the impact of government support on public services, businesses, individuals and sectors, including the leisure, gyms and fitness sector, as we respond to this pandemic, and keep all policies under review.

■ **Hospitality Industry: VAT**

Sarah Olney:

[\[185447\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will make the 12.5 per cent VAT rate on hospitality permanent.

Jesse Norman:

In order to support the cash flow and viability of about 150,000 businesses and to protect over 2.4 million jobs, the Government has applied a temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors, which will now end on 30 September 2021. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5 per cent will be introduced for these goods and services to ease affected businesses back to the standard rate. The new rate will end on 31 March 2022.

VAT raised about £130 billion in 2019/20, and helps to fund key spending priorities including on health, schools, and defence. Applying the 12.5% rate permanently would come at a significant cost to the Exchequer, and that cost would have to be balanced by increased taxes elsewhere, or reductions in Government spending.

This is a temporary measure to support the cash flow and viability of sectors which have been severely affected by COVID-19.

■ **Housing: Fire Prevention**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[184379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the costs to the public purse of leaseholders (a) losing their home and (b) declaring bankruptcy as a result of the costs of resolving fire safety issues.

Steve Barclay:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer liaises with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on a wide range of issues, including on the Government's £5 billion investment in building safety.

On 10 February 2021, the Government announced a 5-point plan for investment in building safety, with £3.5 billion earmarked for the removal of unsafe cladding on high-rise residential buildings, as well as a new finance scheme for cladding removal on buildings between 11 and 18 metres where no leaseholder will ever pay more than £50 a month.

These measures will provide certainty to residents and lenders, boosting the housing market and helping to ensure that developers, investors and building owners who have the means make a fair contribution to costs of remediation, without passing on costs to leaseholders.

■ Hydrogen: Renewable Energy

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[185268\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the level of support required to develop the UK's green hydrogen economy.

Kemi Badenoch:

As outlined in BEIS' Energy White Paper, the Government intends to take a 'twin-track' approach to developing a hydrogen economy, focusing efforts on both "blue" and "green" hydrogen. This is expected to grow the UK's hydrogen supply chain, build sector confidence, and enable scaling up to ensure the longevity of a hydrogen economy.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan highlighted the significance of hydrogen as a priority technology and the Government recognises the key role it could play in the transition to a net zero economy by 2050. Therefore, the Government has committed to work with industry to aim for 5GW of hydrogen capacity by 2030.

At the 2020 Spending Review, the Chancellor provided £240m for a Net Zero Hydrogen Fund to further the development of a hydrogen economy. The Government is also in the process of developing business models to support the creation of a hydrogen market. Further details of these support mechanisms will be provided in the summer alongside a Hydrogen Strategy.

■ Infrastructure: Finance

Dan Jarvis:

[\[R\] \[184452\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2021 to Question 152528 on Infrastructure: Finance, when he plans to publish the next iteration of the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline.

Jesse Norman:

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority is committed to publishing regular National Infrastructure and Construction Pipelines. The last Pipeline, published in response to COVID-19, set out planned procurements with an estimated contract value of up to £37bn across the 20/21 financial year.

As stated in the National Infrastructure Strategy, the next iteration of the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline will be published in 2021 and will set out future planned investments and procurements.

■ **Manufacturing Industries: Non-domestic Rates**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[184453\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the feasibility of extending the eligibility of the business rate relief scheme to businesses that manufacture (a) food and (b) soft drink products for hospitality businesses to sell.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided enhanced support to eligible properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

As announced in a Written Ministerial Statement on 25 March the Government is providing a further £1.5 billion of additional support to businesses that have not already received business rates relief. This is the fastest and fairest way to support businesses outside the retail, hospitality and leisure relief who have been most adversely affected by the economic impacts of the pandemic.

A range of other measures has been made available for all businesses, including those in the supply chain, such as the extension of the furlough scheme, Recovery Loan schemes, and enhanced Time to Pay for taxes.

■ **Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[185449\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what economic threshold is for the resumption of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income on official development assistance.

Steve Barclay:

The Government intends to return to the 0.7% target when the fiscal situation allows. We cannot at this moment predict with certainty when the current fiscal circumstances will have sufficiently improved.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme and Non-domestic Rates**

Lucy Powell:

[\[184454\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Support Scheme funding and (b) business rates relief has been returned to the Exchequer by businesses since the first covid-19 lockdown in March 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is currently looking at the feasibility of publishing information on how much Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme funding and business rates relief has been returned to the Exchequer by businesses since the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020 and a decision will be forthcoming in due course.

■ Taxis: Finance**Yasmin Qureshi:****[184409]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide urgent financial support to taxi drivers at risk of having their vehicle repossessed.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government has provided an unprecedented package of support for individuals through the pandemic. The majority of taxi drivers are self-employed and so may have been able to benefit from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which was extended at Budget, through a fourth and fifth grant, until September.

Taxi drivers are amongst the 1.5 million businesses that have accessed the Bounce Back Loan scheme over the past 11 months, which has provided facilities totalling £46.5 billion. Taxi drivers experiencing hardship can also apply to the Recovery Loan Scheme, launched earlier this month, which maintains a generous 80% guarantee to ensure lenders continue to have the confidence to lend.

Beyond these schemes, taxi drivers may be able to access other elements of support, including continuation of the uplift in Universal Credit, rental support, mortgage holidays, enhanced Time to Pay for taxes, VAT cuts and deferrals, and other business support grants. At the budget, an extra £425 million business grant funding was announced, on top of the £1.6 billion already allocated, for local authorities to use at their discretion to support local businesses not eligible for Restart Grants, but nonetheless experiencing severe impacts on their business. The taxi and private hire sector may be able to benefit from these recently extended schemes.

■ UAE-UK Sovereign Investment Partnership**Alex Cunningham:****[184439]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Department for International Trade's announcement of 24 March 2021 on the Sovereign Investment Partnership between the UK and the United Arab Emirates, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of that partnership on tax incentives for (a) businesses and (b) investors in the Tees Freeport.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has developed an attractive and ambitious policy offer for freeports, including tax reliefs, which it is working to introduce as soon as possible.

The Treasury welcomes the Sovereign Investment Partnership announced by DIT and the benefits it will bring to places like Tees.

The precise impacts in freeports will ultimately depend on individual businesses and investors, and MHCLG are currently working with each of the announced freeports to agree their plans.

■ UK Trade with EU

Drew Hendry:

[\[185428\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of working with his European counterparts to allow the creation of T1 Customs Declaration forms on the departure of goods from the manufacture when exporting from the UK to the EU, rather than the creation of those forms upon goods reaching the cross border carrier, when goods are transported using multiple carriers.

Jesse Norman:

A Common Transit Convention (CTC) transit movement can be started and the Transit Accompanying Document (TAD) can be printed out at the customs office of departure or at the premises of an authorised consignor. Businesses seeking to start transit movements from their own location can seek authorisation to be a consignor.

The requirements of the convention are that the TAD covers a single means of transport, package or container. If this single means of transport is broken, then the transit movement should end. There are processes under the CTC which allow for a change of tractor unit/trailer following an incident; however, this must be marked on the TAD and reported to the nearest customs office. Alternatively, if the transit consignment is in a container then this container can change mode of transport, providing this is overseen by customs authorities.

HMRC are currently involved in discussions with the Common Transit Convention Working Group about removing or reducing the oversight of customs authorities for this change in mode of transport which will make these movements easier.

■ Vocational Education: Finance

Karin Smyth:

[\[185418\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the policies outlined in the Skills for Jobs White Paper are adequately funded.

Steve Barclay:

At Spending Review 2020, the government announced £291 million of investment in Further Education in 21-22, to ensure that core funding for 16-19 year-olds is maintained in real terms per learner, rising in line with demographic growth, as well as £180m of additional capital funding to build new FE college places, for the roll-out of T Levels, and for Institutes of Technology.

The Government is also maintaining its commitment to provide £1.5 billion of capital funding to bring the entire college estate up to a good condition by 2025, announced at Budget 2020, of which £200m was allocated in 20-21 for immediate remedial projects.

Spending Review 2020 also committed £375 million from the National Skills Fund for 21-22. This includes £138 million to deliver the PM's Lifetime Skills Guarantee - of which £95 million will fund free in-demand technical courses for adults at Level 3 (equivalent to A Level) and £43 million to expand employer-led skills bootcamps

across England - and £110 million, including £50m of capital investment, to drive up higher technical provision in support of the future roll out of a flexible Lifelong Loan Entitlement, and to test and develop innovative models for local collaboration between skills providers and employers.

Funding beyond 21-22 will be considered as part of the next Spending Review.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Gender Recognition Act 2004

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[185446\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of updating the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to include self-declaration for transgender and non-binary people.

Kemi Badenoch:

We want all LGBT people to be able to live and prosper in modern Britain. We listened closely to all those who responded to the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and our response was published on 22 September 2020, stating that it is the Government's view that the balance struck in this legislation is correct. There are proper checks and balances in the system as well as support for people who want to change their legal sex.

However, it is clear that we need to improve the process and experience that transgender people have when applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC). That is why we are digitising the process and reducing the fee to lessen the administrative burden on individuals who want to legally change their gender and ensure that no one faces financial barriers when doing so. We want to make sure that applying for a GRC is as straightforward and dignified as possible.

■ UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Zarah Sultana:

[\[184558\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she has taken to incorporate the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women into domestic law.

Kemi Badenoch:

We are committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); our interim report to the CEDAW Committee is due to be published and available online in the coming weeks. This report will set out the steps taken, in different parts of the UK, to implement four of the recommendations identified in 2019 by the Committee in its concluding observations.

The substantive provisions of CEDAW are already largely reflected in existing domestic legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The UK has strong human rights protections within a comprehensive and well-established constitutional and legal system. We have a longstanding tradition of ensuring rights and liberties are protected domestically, and of fulfilling our international human rights obligations.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Child Maintenance Service: Complaints

Zarah Sultana:

[181448]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Child Maintenance Service in the last 12 months, what proportion of (a) complaints to that Service have resulted in further action and (b) non-resident parents are compliant with their payments; and what the average time is between a complaint to that Service and a resolution.

Guy Opperman:

The Department does not measure complaints resulting in further action as described in the question (a), so this information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The number of Paying Parents who have paid Child Maintenance are published quarterly. The latest published figures for Child Maintenance Service (CMS) are up to the end of December 2020 and the compliance statistics can be found in "Table 2: Compliance (Collect and Pay) by quarter" of the "CMS Paying Parents" section of Stat-Xplore here:

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

Jessica Morden:

[183105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time was for a response to a complaint made to the Child Maintenance Service in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) January to April 2021.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The Department does not measure timings as described in the question, so this information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Complaints received about the Child Maintenance Service are handled in line with the overall Departmental complaints process published on Gov.uk. We aim to contact customers within 15 working days to clear the complaint or agree how to investigate it if it will take longer.

■ Coronavirus: Databases

Chris Green: [\[183172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to work with the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Guy Opperman:

No assessment has yet been made, nor any decisions made, on whether to use the data systems used by NHS Test and Trace for other purposes beyond those related to Covid-19. Any work to assess potential future uses of these data systems would be met from within the financial resources already allocated to NHS Test and Trace for the 2021/22 financial year.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Contact Tracing

Chris Green: [\[182057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on future uses of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Guy Opperman:

No such discussions have taken place.

Chris Green: [\[183171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if any financial or other resource allocation has been made to investigate the possibility of how her Department can make use of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Guy Opperman:

No assessment has yet been made, nor any decisions made, on whether to use the data systems used by NHS Test and Trace for other purposes beyond those related to Covid-19. Any work to assess potential future uses of these data systems would be met from within the financial resources already allocated to NHS Test and Trace for the 2021/22 financial year.

■ Discretionary Housing Payments

Paul Blomfield: [\[185354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of delaying part of the grant which funds the Discretionary Housing Payment for 2020-21 until October 2021 on local authorities' ability to administer that payment effectively.

Will Quince:

There has been no delay to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) funding.

DHP funding for 2021/22 is a total of £140m, which will be allocated in two parts. £100m initial allocation at the start of the financial year, followed by £40m at mid-year which will be allocated based on the most up to date information available on each

LAs individual needs; this approach aims to ensure that DHPs are targeted to areas with the greatest need.

We have been closely monitoring the DHP spend and we will continue to do this throughout 2021/22.

■ **Employment: Ethnic Groups**

Cat Smith:

[\[180547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of job (a) losses and (b) insecurity as a result of the covid-19 outbreak on Black, Asian and ethnic minority young people.

Mims Davies:

Data from the Annual Population Survey shows a rise of 5.2 percentage points year on year in the unemployment rate for BAME young people. It also suggests they are over-represented in sectors such as Accommodation and Food Services and Wholesale and Retail which have been particularly affected by the pandemic.

The Government is committed to levelling up and uniting the country, including improving the employment outcomes of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Throughout these unprecedented times the Government has provided a crucial safety net to record levels of claimants, ensuring all our customers receive the support they need, when they need it.

■ **Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[185321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the removal of the spare room subsidy on debt levels since the outbreak of covid-19.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

For those living in the Social Rented Sector, maximum housing costs support is based on actual rent and eligible service charges less any deductions for under-occupation.

The 'Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy' policy has helped to encourage mobility within the social rented sector, strengthen work incentives and make better use of available social housing.

The policy already allows for the provision of an additional bedroom for disabled people and carers, foster carers, parents who adopt, parents of service personnel, and people who have suffered a recent bereavement. Additionally, those in receipt of pension age housing benefit are exempt.

If a claimant's ability to mitigate any shortfall between their housing support and rent has changed as a result of Covid-19, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are

available. DHPs can be paid to those in receipt of Housing Benefit or support with housing costs in Universal Credit, who face a shortfall in meeting their rental housing costs. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in DHP funding.

■ Jobseeker's Allowance

Bambos Charalambous: [\[183244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the six month term for jobseekers' allowance whilst furlough is in place.

Mims Davies:

The 182-day limit is provided for in primary legislation and has remained unaltered since 1995.

The time limit strikes a balance in providing support whilst keeping the cost of this and other contributory benefits affordable based on the overall income to the National Insurance Fund each year. The government has no plans to extend the period of entitlement in response to the pandemic.

People who are entitled to new style Jobseeker's Allowance, or whose entitlement ends before they find employment, may have access to income-related support through Universal Credit. Entitlement will depend on individual circumstances.

■ Jobseeker's Allowance: Internet

Seema Malhotra: [\[185374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department is providing to job seekers with no access to the internet to apply for jobs online.

Mims Davies:

Throughout the pandemic, Jobcentres have remained open for anyone who needs face-to-face support and cannot be helped in any other way. We have continued to provide vital support to the most vulnerable and those who cannot access our services remotely. Digital and phone options remained as they were, ensuring that customers can access all the help available to them.

From 12 April we restarted face to face services as we returned to our normal opening hours from 9am to 5pm for Jobcentres in England and Wales. We will restart the same face to face service in Scotland from 26 April. All Jobcentre Plus offices across the country have Wi-Fi and computers available for claimants to access the internet.

Our priority continues to be supporting people back into work through our network of dedicated Work Coaches, as we help Britain to build back better from this pandemic.

■ Social Security Benefits: Cancer

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[184528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people living with cancer in England have had a DS1500 medical condition report submitted by their clinicians in 2021.

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[184529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people living with cancer in Wales have had a DS1500 medical condition report submitted by their clinicians in 2021.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The DS1500 can be completed by a terminally ill patient's doctor or other healthcare professional and returned to DWP. The doctor or healthcare professional provides information about their patient's condition, including its clinical features and ongoing or planned treatment on the DS1500. The DS1500 is not a claim form in itself and is not a requirement to support a claim under the special rules for terminal illness.

A DS1500 can be completed during the claim process for various benefits: Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Universal Credit (UC), Attendance Allowance (AA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

■ Social Security Benefits: Internet

Seema Malhotra:

[\[185373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of universal credit claimants without access to the internet at home.

Mims Davies:

No such assessment has been made.

The Office for National Statistics statistical bulletin 'Internet access – households and individuals, Great Britain: 2020' reported that in January to February 2020, 96% of households in Great Britain had internet access. This can be accessed at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2020>

Our Universal Credit Claimant Survey found that 96 per cent of claimants have regular access to the internet. Of these, 9 in 10 claimants have access at home via a computer or through a mobile phone. This can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-full-service-claimant-survey>

From 12 April 2021 we restarted face to face services as we returned to our normal opening hours from 9am to 5pm for jobcentres in England and Wales. We will restart the same face to face service in Scotland from 26 April. All Jobcentre Plus offices across the country have Wi-Fi and computers available for claimants to access the internet.

For those claimants who are unable to access or use our digital services, there is assistance available to make and maintain their Universal Credit claim using the Freephone Universal Credit helpline.

Running alongside the national Jobcentre offer is Help to Claim, delivered by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, providing people with assistance in making a Universal Credit claim. Help to Claim offers tailored, practical support to help people make their claim up to receiving their first full correct payment on time. It is widely available through a variety of channels, including by telephone and web chat.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

David Linden: [183258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March 2021 to Question 169940 on Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations, how many and what proportion claimants who had a telephone assessment with no outcome have participated in a second telephone assessment since February 2021; and how many and what proportion of those claimants have since received an outcome.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Karl Turner: [R] [184427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the planned timescale is for resuming face-to-face benefits assessments during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Honourable gentleman will find details of our plans to resume face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

■ State Retirement Pensions

Colleen Fletcher: [184473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the gender pension gap in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry and (c) England; and what steps she is taking to tackle the gender pension gap in each of those areas.

Guy Opperman:

The Department does not hold data in the form requested.

Through automatic enrolment, we are enabling more women to build up a workplace pension; participation among eligible women working in the private sector has risen from 40% in 2012 to 86% in 2019, which is equal to men. The Government remains committed to addressing this issue and we are making progress, including through promoting women's progression in workplaces; the introduction of shared parental leave and mandatory gender pay gap reporting.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna:

[\[185503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department holds on the number of people who worked in Northern Ireland and paid national insurance contributions while aged 14 or 15 between 1947 and 1957, that have fallen two years or less short of the years needed to qualify for a full state pension.

Guy Opperman:

The information requested is not available.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Reciprocal Arrangements**

Dave Doogan:

[\[185488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will work with (a) Australian, (b) Canadian and (c) other relevant overseas governments to establish a reciprocal social security agreement in order to end frozen pension policy.

Guy Opperman:

The UK has no plans to change its longstanding policy position.

■ **Universal Credit**

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[185272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Universal Credit Programme Board minutes, Paper 1, deposited in the Library on 15 April 2021, what the evidential basis is for her assessment of the merits of people going immediately onto universal credit and fewer people needing Transitional Protection as a result of the end date for managed migration being moved to the end of 2023 from March 2023.

Will Quince:

The Universal Credit Programme Board papers deposited in the Library relate to meetings held between October 2018 and March 2019.

In Spring 2020, at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the Department refocused considerable resource to ensuring that all those who needed support during this time could access it, and be paid in full and on time. Since that time, the volume of people on the Universal Credit has doubled to 6 million, which means that our planning for those requiring Transitional Protection has evolved accordingly. We currently anticipate that the process of moving legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit will be completed by the end of 2024.

Universal Credit offers many advantages over the legacy benefit system: from improved support and access to Work Coaches to improved incentives to increase earnings through the taper rate and Work Allowance. As a consequence, it is reasonable to assume that there will be claimants who do not wish to wait to be moved, or experience a change in their circumstances, which prompts them to claim Universal Credit, and we are looking at how we can support those claimants.

■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

David Linden:

[183255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the (a) rate of universal credit sanctions on claimants who have a mental health condition and (b) effect of those sanctions on those people; and if she will publish that assessment.

Mims Davies:

No assessment has been made of the (a) rate of Universal Credit sanctions on claimants who have a mental health condition and (b) effect of those sanctions on those people.

We engage on an individual level with all of our claimants and are committed to tailoring support to their individual needs. This includes agreeing realistic and structured steps to encourage claimants into, or closer to, work, where appropriate. These conditionality requirements are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate for the claimant. This would include tailoring to reflect any mental health issues the claimant raised.

When considering whether a sanction is appropriate, a Decision Maker will take the claimant's individual circumstances, including any health conditions or disabilities and any evidence of good reason, into account before deciding whether a sanction is warranted.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Hong Kong: National Security

Layla Moran:

[\[181416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the National Security Curriculum in Hong Kong.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 April 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Nigel Adams:

Article 10 of the Hong Kong National Security Law, requires the Hong Kong authorities to promote national security education in schools and universities and through social organisations, the media and the internet. As the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement of 1 July 2020, this legislation constitutes a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, undermining Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and its rights and freedoms. Separately, in his Foreword to the UK Government's Six Monthly Report on Hong Kong covering the period 1 July ~~January~~ to 31 ~~July~~ December 2020, the Foreign Secretary noted that the chilling effects of the National Security Law were already being seen in Hong Kong, including damaging freedom of expression in academia and schools.

As a co-signatory to the Joint Declaration, we have a duty to speak out when we have concerns. We will continue to bring together our international partners to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their freedoms, and to hold China to their international obligations it freely assumed under international law.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Fan-led Review of Football Governance

Minister for Sport and Tourism (Nigel Huddleston):

[\[HCWS939\]](#)

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced an independent fan-led review of football governance on 19 April. This will be chaired by the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford.

This manifesto commitment followed a number of high profile club collapses in recent years, including Bury Football Club which resulted in its expulsion from the English Football League. Football clubs are integral parts of our local communities and it is vital that they are protected. The European Super League proposals, which would have been detrimental to the entire football pyramid, demonstrated that now is the right time to launch the review.

The Government has now published the [Terms of Reference](#) for the review. It will seek to make recommendations on ways to improve the governance, ownership and financial sustainability of clubs in English football, building on the strengths of the football pyramid. This will include examining the Owners' and Directors' Tests, exploring ownership models from other countries, and assessing the merits of an independent regulator.

Football begins and ends with fans and we have seen that passionately displayed over the past few days, with clubs being the beating heart of their communities. This review will help put football on a firmer footing for the future and ensure that supporters' voices are heard.

A copy of the Terms of Reference will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. Football Governance ToR [Football Governance Review_ Terms of Reference .pdf]

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Anti-Corruption Update

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab):

[\[HCWS936\]](#)

I have today laid before Parliament, under the powers of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, the Global Anti-Corruption Sanctions Regulations 2021.

The sanctions regime established by these Regulations seeks to prevent and combat serious corruption around the world by allowing for asset freezes and travel bans to be imposed on individuals or organisations involved in serious corruption. It is a smart tool allowing the Government to target corrupt actors and their enablers. It will prevent those responsible from entering the UK or laundering their ill-gotten assets here. These

sanctions will help to ensure that the UK is not a safe haven for those involved in serious corruption, including those who profit from it.

The Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime will stand alongside the Global Human Rights sanctions regime and give the UK an additional, powerful device to prevent and combat serious corruption around the world.

Today, I will also give an Oral Statement to set out the new sanctions regime and publish the first persons to be designated under it.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Notification of contingent liabilities in relation to the transfer of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) National Biosample Centre

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): [\[HCWS937\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Innovation (Lord Bethell of Romford) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) National Biosample Centre is a state-of-the-art biosample storage and processing facility. It was established in 2014 through a capital grant from the then Department of Health to the University of Oxford, with the aim of enhancing the nation's capability and capacity to support medical, health and life sciences research into disease mechanisms, new diagnostics and treatments. The NIHR National Biosample Centre remains a key national asset in the context of the Government's commitment to the life sciences and, since April 2020, it has also served as the Milton Keynes Lighthouse Lab for COVID-19 testing.

To help ensure the long-term financial viability of the NIHR National Biosample Centre, and following consideration of several options, I have approved the transfer of the assets and leasing business from the University of Oxford to the Department of Health and Social Care; in return, the Department will pay £1 and provide the University of Oxford with two indemnities relating to its ownership.

I have today presented a departmental Minute notifying parliament of the two contingent liabilities arising from the provision of these indemnities. Details of the contingent liabilities are set out in the Minute.

TREASURY

■ Kalifa Review of UK Fintech

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak): [\[HCWS938\]](#)

Innovation is at the forefront of our vision for the future of UK financial services. The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK remains at the global cutting edge of technology and innovation in financial services. Creating the conditions needed for our Fintech businesses to grow and compete, both here and abroad, is central to delivering

on this ambition. This is why, at Budget 2020, I asked Ron Kalifa OBE to carry out an independent review of the UK Fintech sector.

The Kalifa Review of UK Fintech (the Review) [1] was published on 26 February 2021. It made a number of recommendations aimed at Government, regulators, and industry across five areas: Policy and Regulation, Skills and Talent, Investment, International Attractiveness and Competitiveness, and National Connectivity. At publication, HM Treasury welcomed the Review and highlighted key recommendations including:

- A Centre for Finance, Innovation, and Technology to strengthen national coordination across the Fintech ecosystem to boost growth
- A regulatory 'scalebox' to provide additional support to growth stage Fintechs
- Amendments to UK listings rules to make the UK a more attractive location for Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)
- Improvements to tech visas to attract global talent and boost the Fintech workforce

Here we have set out the actions that Government and regulators are taking in response to the Review's recommendations.

Centre for Finance, Innovation and Technology

The Government recognises the potential for a private-sector-led Centre for Finance, Innovation and Technology (CFIT) as an accelerator for Fintech sector growth. It can achieve this through research, thought leadership, and working with regional Fintech hubs and national Fintech bodies to identify and address barriers to growth to the benefit of the sector across the whole of the UK. I have confirmed that the Government supports the creation of this Centre and that it will work closely with the Fintech community to make it a reality.

Regulatory Scalebox

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has also welcomed the Kalifa Review and has set out steps it will be taking to deliver against the Review's idea for a 'regulatory scalebox', by

enhancing its existing regulatory toolkit. These actions include:

- Launching 'Always Open' to make the Regulatory Sandbox available on a rolling basis
- Clarifying the scope of qualifying propositions for the Regulatory Sandbox to ensure as many firms as possible are able to access support
- Launching, in conjunction with the City of London Corporation, the second phase of the Digital Sandbox pilot, inviting applications to test proof of concepts to solve sustainability and climate change financial challenges
- Considering how to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for growth-stage firms to dock in and easily navigate what sources of FCA support are available to them

- Working with industry over coming months to identify further solutions for supporting firms manage the journey to scale

The FCA has also announced plans to create a regulatory 'nursery' for enhanced oversight of newly authorised firms, enabling an opportunity for additional support as firms become used to the requirements of regulatory compliance.

Listings regime

The Lord Hill Listings Review, which was published at Budget 2021, made recommendations to boost the UK as a destination for IPOs and optimise the capital raising process on UK markets, addresses a number of the Kalifa Review's recommendations for attracting more Fintech listings to the UK. The Government set out details of its response to Lord Hill's Review in a Written Ministerial Statement on 19 April (HCWS919). In parallel, the FCA plans to consult on issues raised by the Kalifa Review including reducing the minimum 'free float' a company must have when it lists, and whether premium listed companies can have dual share class structures.

Scale-up visa

The Government demonstrated its support for attracting international talent to the UK at Budget 2021 by announcing creation of a 'scale-up visa stream'. The new stream will be created within a new elite points-based route that will allow employees with a job offer at the required skills level from a recognised UK scale up, including Fintechs, to qualify for a fast-track visa, without the need for sponsorship or third-party endorsement. The Government will set out further details by July and the new route will be implemented by March 2022.

International competitiveness

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has announced it will create two new Fintech initiatives in response to the Review. The first is a new Fintech cohort within DIT's Export Academy initiative. This will provide bespoke, 1-2-1 advice to eligible UK Fintechs who are ready to scale into key markets such as North America, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Tailored advice will cover topics such as legal, tax, regulation, accounting, and market entry matters, all of which will support the international expansion ambitions of Fintechs on the programme. This is in addition to the wide range of existing DIT export support services currently available for UK businesses. DIT will also establish a Fintech Champions scheme, comprising of leading UK Fintech advocates who are successfully exporting. DIT Fintech Champions will fly the flag for UK Fintech overseas and support the next generation of UK Fintechs in their growth journeys through mentoring and peer to peer learning. Both initiatives will enhance UK Fintech overseas, further elevating the UK's status as a world leading Fintech Hub.

Regulation for digital finance

The Review also made recommendations more broadly for the Government to develop a regulatory framework for digitalisation and emerging technology in financial services. The Government is taking forward a number of initiatives in these areas:

Along with the Bank of England, HM Treasury has launched a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) Taskforce to coordinate the exploration of a potential UK CBDC – the Government and the Bank of England have not yet made a decision on whether to introduce a CBDC in the UK. A CBDC would be a new form of money that would exist alongside cash and bank deposits, rather than replacing them; the Government recognises that cash remains important to millions of people across the UK, and has committed to legislating to protect access to cash.

HM Treasury and the Bank of England are launching a CBDC Engagement Forum to gather strategic input on all non-technology aspects of CBDC.

The Bank of England is also launching a CBDC Technology Forum to gather input on all technology aspects of CBDC.

The Bank of England has launched a new account type that will allow access to central bank money by innovative financial market infrastructure providers to allow them to provide enhanced wholesale payment and settlement.

The Government has announced a financial market infrastructure (FMI) sandbox for firms exploring how to use technologies, such as distributed ledger technology (DLT), to innovate in the settlement of financial securities. This regime will aim to support firms, which are developing this new technology, with a more flexible and tailored approach to meeting requirements in current legislation, whilst appropriately balancing any risks to financial stability, market integrity and consumer protection. This new regime will be inspired by the FCA's sandbox and HM Treasury will work together with the Bank of England and the FCA to deliver this.

In 2020 the Government committed to creating a framework of standards, governance, and legislation to enable a UK Digital Identity market. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) published a draft Trust Framework for consultation in February this year which sets out the Government's vision for the rules governing the future use of Digital Identities. A next iteration is expected to be published this summer.

The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy is taking forward work on Smart Data and has committed to bringing forward legislation to better enable data-sharing across-sectors, including Open Finance. The FCA published a Call for Input on Open Finance in 2019 and published a Feedback Statement in March this year. This set out that the FCA will work closely with the Government as it takes forward the work on legislation as well as assessing the regulatory framework that would be needed to support Open Finance.

Tax

The Review also highlighted the benefits of tax incentive schemes in supporting Fintech growth and at Budget 2021 the Government announced steps it is taking to ensure the schemes work as efficiently as possible, including:

- A Call for Evidence on the Enterprise Management Incentive scheme to seek views on whether the scheme is meeting its objectives, and examine whether more companies should be able to access the scheme

- A review of R&D tax reliefs which follows the consultation last year on expanding the qualifying expenditures to include cloud computing and data

The Kalifa Review also makes various recommendations that Government considers industry is best placed to take forward and I am grateful to Ron Kalifa for bringing these to my attention.

I would like to conclude by thanking Ron Kalifa and his team for their exceptional work in producing this seminal Review. Ron has succeeded in producing insightful analysis, and garnering widespread support from industry for a suite of proposals that keep us on track for the continued success of UK Fintech.

I look forward to taking forward the steps I have outlined today.

[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/978396/KalifaReviewofUKFintech01.pdf