



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 19 May 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 19 May 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

Questions marked thus [R] indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Staff

Ellie Reeves: [409]

To ask the Attorney General, how many CPS prosecutors have been in employment in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of CPS prosecutors who have been in employment in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021 is as follows:

(a) 2485 (31 March 2018)

(b) 2579 (31 March 2019)

(c) 2692 (31 March 2020)

(d) 2943 (31 March 2021)

Source Data: Trent and Oracle HR Database

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Ben Lake: [410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to establish a commission similar to the Scottish Government's Just Transition Commission to make practical recommendations on how the UK can make a transition to a net zero economy that is equitable to everyone.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Delivering net zero and levelling up our country are at the forefront of Government's plans to build back better from the pandemic.

In order to support this, HM Treasury is conducting a review into the costs of reaching Net Zero, which will assess how to do so in a way that works for households, businesses and public finances, as well as maintaining our international competitiveness.

In addition, BEIS has established the Green Jobs Taskforce working with industry, unions and skills providers, together with the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions, to advise on how we can develop plans for new, long-term, good quality green jobs, and support workers in high-carbon sectors.

This work will feed into our Net Zero Strategy, which will set out our vision for transitioning to a net zero economy, making the most of new growth and employment opportunities across the UK.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional financial support he has made available to hospitality businesses that are unable to reopen until 17 May 2021 during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government has brought forward a substantial package of financial support for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Budget, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £65 billion plan to provide support for jobs and businesses, including small businesses in the hospitality sector, with extensions to furlough, self-employed support, business grants, loans and VAT cuts. The total financial support package provided to support the economy, lives and livelihoods throughout the pandemic is now worth £352 billion.

■ **Construction: Iron and Steel**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to address the national shortage of steel preventing construction companies from fully operating.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are aware of concerns about the supply of steel, which is of critical importance to construction and other sectors. This is a global market issue which we are monitoring closely.

■ **Construction: Materials**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to address the national shortage of building materials affecting construction companies in the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is aware that a range of building materials are in short supply nationally. This is driven by demand and increased global competition to secure supplies.

In light of this, and in view of more local disruptions in the supply of some products, the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force has established a Product Availability Working Group, comprised of product manufacturers, builders' merchants and suppliers, contractors of all sizes, and housebuilders. The Task Force continues to monitor the supply and demand of products, and identify those in short supply.

■ Consumer Goods: Electrical Safety

Munira Wilson:

[\[465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of regulating electrical goods sold online to ensure their safety for use.

Paul Scully:

Existing laws require that all consumer products must be safe before they can be placed on the UK market, including those sold online.

The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 (EESRs) require products to be designed and manufactured in accordance with the principal elements of the safety objectives. Under the EESRs, a distributor, including online retailers and those selling goods via online marketplaces, must act with due care to ensure that electrical products are in conformity with the requirements.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is engaged with online marketplaces to ensure that they are playing their part in protecting UK consumers from unsafe products. This includes developing a new voluntary commitment for online marketplaces to agree actions they will take to reduce the risks from unsafe products sold by others on their platforms, enabling them to publicly demonstrate their commitment to the safety of consumers in the UK.

In order to ensure that the UK's Product Safety framework is flexible and fit for the future, the OPSS is conducting a review. The review will ensure we have a framework that continues to deliver safety for consumers while supporting businesses to innovate and grow and will consider non-traditional business models, including online sales.

■ Electric Vehicles and Wind Power: Manufacturing Industries

Steve Double:

[\[329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to ensure the delivery of key components for the manufacturing of electric vehicles and wind turbines other than lithium ion-batteries.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As part of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, nearly £500m of funding for the Automotive Transformation Fund will be made available in the next four years to build an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain. This funding is the first part of the up to £1 billion committed by the Government to ensure that the UK takes advantage of this once in a generation opportunity. The Automotive Transformation Fund will target support at strategically important technologies (batteries, motors, drives, power electronics and fuel cells).

The Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme allocated £160 million to upgrade ports and manufacturing infrastructure across the UK to enable the sector to support jobs and investment in ports, factories and the supply chains, manufacturing

the next-generation of offshore wind turbines. In February we announced up to £95m to invest in two new dedicated offshore wind ports in Teesside and Humberside, and in March we announced the first investment, GE Renewables who will build a state-of-the-art blade manufacturing facility at Teesside creating 735 direct jobs.

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Europe

Andrew Rosindell: [\[111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the energy the UK uses is provided by undersea cables from mainland Europe.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The following table shows net imports from mainland Europe as a proportion of total UK electricity supply for 2017 to 2020. The data for 2020 is provisional; final data will be published at the end of July.

YEAR	NET IMPORTS % OF UK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY
2017	4.2 %
2018	5.7 %
2019	6.6 %
2020	5.6 %

Source: *Energy Trends tables 5.1 and 5.6*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/electricity-section-5-energy-trends>

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Portsmouth

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[1266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which Minister will be responsible for reviewing the application for development consent on the Aquind Interconnector Pipeline between the UK and France.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The decision to grant or refuse development consent for the proposed Aquind Interconnector will be taken by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

■ Energy Supply

Andrew Rosindell: [\[112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to progress the UK to energy independence.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Ensuring that UK homes and businesses have the certainty of secure energy supplies now and in the future is an absolute priority. In terms of electricity, the UK's main tool for ensuring secure supplies is the Capacity Market, which secures the capacity required to meet peak demand in a range of scenarios through auctions held four years and one year ahead of delivery. The auctions which have taken place this year have secured the majority of the UK's capacity needs out to 2024/25 at a low cost. Electricity interconnection is also an important part of the UK's energy strategy, delivering lower costs for consumers, increased energy security, and better integrated low-carbon generation. Moreover, electricity interconnectors can also contribute to security of supply by providing access to a wider pool of generation across different markets.

In terms of gas, the UK benefits from highly diverse and flexible sources, including indigenous production, six international gas pipelines with Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands, and three Liquefied Natural Gas terminals. This diversity contributes to our strong security of supply and resilience to disruptions (such as severe weather conditions) even for an extended period. The UK also has a number of gas storage facilities, which act as a source of system flexibility when responding to short-run changes in supply and demand.

■ Help to Grow Scheme**Sam Tarry:**[\[524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what software is approved for the 50 per cent discount voucher for companies using the Help to Grow Scheme; and what routes are open for a software company to apply for approval to be a supplier for that scheme.

Paul Scully:

Help to Grow: Digital is seeking to encourage small businesses to adopt software which will help them save time, money and grow.

Further detail covering the software the voucher can be used on and how vendors eligible for the scheme can apply will be published prior to the Autumn launch date.

■ Hydrogen: Ynys Môn**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[1414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential for the new hydrogen hub on Ynys Môn to contribute to the decarbonisation of the transport sector particularly through the use of hydrogen-powered heavy trucks.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The UK Government has made available £4.8 million, subject to business case and other approvals, to support the development of the Holyhead Hydrogen Hub. The project proposes a hydrogen pilot production plant that would supply hydrogen fuel to

the heavy goods and maritime vehicle markets on Ynys Môn. Officials are liaising with the developer and expect to consider the business case for the project in due course.

Hydrogen is expected to play a key role in transport decarbonisation, but it is likely to be most effective in the areas 'that batteries cannot reach', where energy density requirements or duty cycles and refuelling times make it the most suitable low carbon energy source. This might include its use in heavy goods vehicles, buses, rail, shipping and aviation. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will continue to work closely with the Department for Transport to explore the possibilities hydrogen can offer across different transport modes.

■ Magnets: Manufacturing Industries

Steve Double:

[\[328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to develop an industrial magnet industry in the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government recognises the importance of industrial magnets in a range of advanced manufacturing applications, including as key components in zero emission vehicles and in wind turbines. The UK magnet industry can therefore play a significant role in our plans for green growth, levelling up across our country and driving emissions to net zero by 2050.

We are investing in R&D and capital projects to develop and embed the next generation of technologies in the UK. For example, through the Automotive Transformation Fund, Less Common Metals (Cheshire) has secured funding for two studies that will look at the feasibility of, and the requirements for, a rare earth permanent magnet plant in the UK. Our Driving the Electric Revolution Challenge is investing £80 million in electrification technologies, including projects relating to the recovery and recycling of rare earth elements, and activities to facilitate the development of rare earth magnet supply chains in the UK.

In addition, the Department for International Trade and other departments are working with UK and overseas mining companies and host Governments, to support and enable UK investment in the extraction, processing and refining of the raw materials required for magnet manufacture. This includes supporting investment in projects to process and refine these materials in the UK.

■ New Businesses: Coronavirus

Lee Anderson:

[\[445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support the Government is planning to provide to new businesses setting up after the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

This Government is committed to supporting new businesses and entrepreneurs as we come out of the pandemic.

Our network of 38 Growth Hubs across England, provides key services to new businesses offering free information and 1-1 advice, alongside our free Business Support Helpline. Growth Hubs offer triage, diagnostic and signposting services to make sure that all businesses know what support is available and know how to apply.

We are also committed to supporting new businesses to access the finance they need, through working with the British Business Bank (BBB). The Start Up Loans programme, part of the BBB, has delivered 82,797 loans across the UK with a value of more than £722.3 million since the programme's launch in 2012 to the end of March 2021.

The Government's business advice pages on GOV.UK also provide information and guidance relevant to starting, growing and maintaining a business, as well as their statutory rights and obligations, and links to support provided by devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. All details can be found online: www.gov.uk/browse/business.

Public Houses: Coronavirus**Sarah Olney:****[1355]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he makes of the merits of providing a direct grant of up to £30,000 to each small brewer in England to compensate for the costs of the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the impact the pandemic has had on hospitality businesses including breweries. That is why we have provided an unprecedented support package of £352 billion including grants, loans, business rates relief, VAT cuts and the job retention scheme.

Restart Grant Scheme**James Daly:****[551]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that (a) local authorities correctly categorise businesses for the Restart Grant application and (b) there is consistency across local authorities in the funds granted to (i) bridal shops and (ii) other businesses.

Paul Scully:

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. Non-essential retail businesses, such as bridal shops, will be able apply for Restart Grants of up to £6,000. Businesses in the hospitality, leisure, personal care and gym sectors are able to apply for grants of up to £18,000.

If a business operates services that could be considered non-essential retail and also fall into another category, such as hospitality in the higher funding threshold, the main service can be determined by assessing which category constitutes 50% or more of their overall business.

The main service principle will determine which threshold of funding a business receives. Businesses will need to declare which is their main service. Local Authorities will need to exercise their reasonable judgement to determine whether or not a business is eligible for grants under which funding threshold and be satisfied that they have taken reasonable and practicable steps to pay eligible businesses and to pay them the correct amount

Throughout the pandemic, BEIS officials have worked closely with Local Authorities to ensure that grants are delivered as quickly as possible, while safeguarding public funds. As the range of grants available has increased, officials have continued regular briefings with all 314 Local Authorities to provide the latest guidance and respond to questions. Ministers have also held regular conversations with leaders and chief executives.

■ Solar Events

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, on which date the Government last undertook a cross-departmental exercise on responding to a simulated severe space weather event; and what lessons were learnt from that exercise.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government last held a cross-departmental exercise on responding to a simulated severe space weather event on 23rd July 2015. This exercise was held by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and was hosted by the Government Chief Scientific Advisor.

The key lessons learnt include the need for more coordinated work in understanding and planning for impacts to passengers and operators across a range of transport sectors; the need for a clear narrative on secondary impacts; and the need to define the role of a Lead Government Department during a space weather emergency.

Following this exercise, it was determined BEIS to be designated the Lead Government Department for a severe space weather event.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to conduct a cross-government exercise to respond to a simulated severe space weather event.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS is due to publish a new space weather strategy later this year, which will set out a five-year road map for how we intend to boost resilience and continue to increase our preparedness for a severe space weather event.

The space weather strategy will set out further details on assurance of resilience to a severe space weather event, including appropriate exercising.

■ Solar Power: Imports

Andrew Rosindell:

[110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure solar panels imported into the UK are not produced in unacceptable working conditions.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are thoroughly investigating reports of forced labour in the global solar panel supply chain. In January, we announced a comprehensive package of measures to help ensure no UK organisations are complicit in the serious human rights violations being perpetrated against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

We reiterate our call for all UK companies, including those using polysilicon in their supply chains, to ensure their supply chains are free of forced labour. We have provided detailed and specific guidance to UK businesses, and we will continue to engage businesses, including on these latest allegations.

We are working with the UK solar sector as a matter of urgency to ensure companies are aware of the relevant legislation and international frameworks on human rights. Solar Energy UK has issued an [industry statement](#), committing to support the development of a supply chain traceability protocol.

■ Solar Power: Xinjiang

Andrew Rosindell:

[109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports that UK solar farms have been built using panels made in Xinjiang province.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are thoroughly investigating reports of forced labour in the global solar panel supply chain. In January, we announced a comprehensive package of measures to help ensure no UK organisations are complicit in the serious human rights violations being perpetrated against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

We reiterate our call for all UK companies, including those using polysilicon in their supply chains, to ensure their supply chains are free of forced labour. We have provided detailed and specific guidance to UK businesses, and we will continue to engage businesses, including on these latest allegations.

We are working with the UK solar sector as a matter of urgency to ensure companies are aware of the relevant legislation and international frameworks on human rights. Solar Energy UK has issued an [industry statement](#), committing to support the development of a supply chain traceability protocol.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Steve Double:

[\[330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the policy paper entitled *The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*, what progress he has made on the delivery of increased offshore wind capacity.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In November 2020, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's *The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution* committed to deploying 40 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030 (including 1GW of floating offshore wind). It also announced £160m of support for offshore wind coastal manufacturing infrastructure across the whole of the UK to support this deployment programme.

The Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme has been very successful in delivering large-scale renewable generation whilst reducing costs through competitive allocation rounds. The next round will open in December 2021 and aims to deliver up to double the renewable capacity of last year's successful round, potentially providing enough clean energy for up to 10 million homes. The allocation round will be open to floating offshore wind projects and both The Crown Estate and Crown Estate Scotland are taking forward plans for seabed leasing rounds for future floating wind projects.

In February 2021, the Department announced up to £95 million of government investment for two new offshore wind port hubs, to be constructed on Humberside and Teesside. The support for the Teesworks Offshore Manufacturing Centre and the Able Marine Energy Park will help to level up the UK economy, bring in new investment, create high-skilled jobs, and provide new opportunities in ports and the areas around them.

In addition, in the Budget 2021 my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Government would provide £27 million, subject to business case, for the Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone, helping to support North East Scotland to play a leading role in meeting the UK's net zero ambitions.

Furthermore, GE Renewable Energy announced an investment in a major new offshore wind turbine blade manufacturing plant, the first investment at the Teesworks Offshore Manufacturing Centre. This brand-new manufacturing facility could create 750 direct renewable energy jobs and close to 1,500 indirect jobs in the area.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Blood: Contamination

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[506\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement of 25 March 2021, HCWS895 on Infected Blood Update, when the Government plans to appoint an independent reviewer to carry out a

study on the compensation framework; and when Government plans to publish a further update.

Penny Mordaunt:

Work to appoint the independent reviewer is ongoing and a further announcement will be made on this in due course.

■ **Veterans**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[87\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to improve awareness of support for veterans.

Leo Docherty:

The Government is committed to making access to support for veterans as easy as possible, including raising awareness of what support is available and how promoting it can be accessed. This support includes Veterans UK and NHS services, such as the recently launched Op Courage Mental Health pathway, as well as the charity sector and recently provided funding to the Veterans Gateway. HMG does this through the education and support the MOD provides to those leaving the Armed Forces, with enhanced support such as the Defence Transition Service for those with the most complex needs.

■ **Veterans: Mental Health**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[91\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the evidence submitted to the Defence Committee, for what reasons the Minister for Defence People and Veterans was advised not to go on the Today programme to discuss veterans' mental health provision.

Julia Lopez:

Ministers have and will continue to appear in the media and in Parliament outlining the range of mental health support available to veterans, as seen recently with the introduction of Op Courage, NHS England's dedicated veterans mental health pathway.

■ **Veterans: Mental Health Services**

Stuart Anderson: [\[860\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps are being taken to support the mental health needs of veterans.

Leo Docherty:

The majority of veterans successfully access mental health services available to the general population. For those who require bespoke treatment, NHS England's Op COURAGE brings together three NHS England veterans' mental health services into a single pathway with a common point of access. £17.8m has been provided for

these services this financial year, and an additional £10m has also been allocated to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to distribute to charitable projects supporting veterans' mental health needs.

DEFENCE

■ Army: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry: [\[1223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Ballymurphy Inquest.

Leo Docherty:

The Coroner's findings were comprehensive and detailed, running to over 700 pages. We are now taking the time to review the report and carefully consider the conclusions drawn. The Prime Minister has made it clear that the terrible events of Ballymurphy should never have happened and has apologised unreservedly for this.

■ National Cyber Force

John Healey: [\[990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what body will oversee the activities of the National Cyber Force to ensure that it is acting in line with the powers enacted to it under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

James Heapey:

The UK deploys its cyber capabilities in accordance with national and international law. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner keeps under review the key statutory powers for the conduct of cyber operations, including the activities of the National Cyber Force. Parliamentary oversight is provided by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.

■ Royal Yacht: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[83\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with Minister for the Cabinet Office on the commissioning of a new royal yacht in each of the last three months.

Jeremy Quin:

In his role as Shipbuilding Tsar, the Secretary of State for Defence regularly engages with Ministers across Government on delivering our vision for the shipbuilding sector, he has met with the Minister for the Cabinet Office bilaterally on one occasion in this time period at which shipbuilding was discussed.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Alberto Costa: [\[312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timeframe is for the completion of the Fan-led review of football governance.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are currently working through the structure of the review with the Chair, including the timeline for publication of the report, and will provide updates shortly. Given the seriousness of these issues, we will be looking to move at pace on this.

Robert Largan: [\[549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has plans to (a) review the estimated value of assets that are dormant in each of the new asset classes to be included in the expanded Dormant Assets Scheme and (b) publish the methodology used to calculate those values.

Matt Warman:

The Dormant Assets Scheme is led by industry and backed by the government with the aim of reuniting people with their financial assets. Where this is not possible, this money supports important social and environmental initiatives across the UK.

As a voluntary Scheme, industry stakeholders have been at the forefront of efforts to bring assets from the insurance and pensions, investment and wealth management, and securities sectors into scope. This includes leading work to estimate the value of dormancy currently in each sector and using their experience and understanding of reunification processes to inform their estimates of how much could be reunited with their owners successfully. The government is grateful for their work on this and has no plans to review their estimates or methodology at this time.

The following table sets out estimated value of assets that are dormant in each of the new asset classes to be included in the expanded Dormant Assets Scheme, broken down by sector:

SECTOR	DORMANT ASSETS	COULD BE REUNITED WITH OWNERS THROUGH ENHANCED TRACING EFFORTS	COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO RFL	COULD BE RELEASED TO SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES
Insurance and pensions	£2.1bn	£1.17bn	£959m	£575m
Investment and wealth management	£1.4bn	£781m	£588m	£238m

SECTOR	DORMANT ASSETS	COULD BE REUNITED WITH OWNERS THROUGH ENHANCED TRACING EFFORTS	COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO RFL	COULD BE RELEASED TO SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES
Securities	£158m	£48m	£110m	£66m
TOTAL	£3.7bn	£2bn	£1.7bn	£880m

The government is now set to expand the Scheme through primary legislation, which was introduced in the House of Lords on Wednesday 12 May 2021.

■ Exercise and Performing Arts: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether there are limits on the number of people over 18 years old who can participate in an indoors (a) performing arts class and (b) exercise class from 17 May 2021.

Andrew Rosindell:

[115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether there are any limits on the number of people under 18 years old who can participate in an indoors (a) performing arts class and (b) exercise class from 17 May 2021.

Caroline Dinéage:

From 17th May, over 18's performing arts classes and activities are permitted indoors and outdoors, within the legal gathering limits. Indoors, people can take part in non-professional performing arts activities in a group of up to 6 people, or as a group of 2 households/bubbles. Activities can take place with multiple permitted groups, provided the groups are kept separate throughout the activity, and the event is organised in line with the [organised events guidance for local authorities](#). However, non-professional singing indoors should only take place in a single group of up to 6 people.

In all settings, social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a bubble. A group made up of 2 households can include more than 6 people, but only where all members of the group are from the same 2 households/bubbles.

For under 18's, from step 3, where wraparound and other extracurricular activities for children are taking place indoors, they will be able to take place in groups of any number. However, when considering appropriate group sizes, it will be important to take into account factors outlined in the [Out of School Settings Guidance](#), such as the recommended occupancy levels of the premises the provider is operating from, and levels of ventilation.

In Step 3, indoor sport is exempt from the gathering limits for adults and children where it is formally organised (for example, by a national governing body, business or charity) and follows measures including COVID-secure guidance. Organised indoor sport must adhere to the relevant capacity restrictions for indoor sport facilities including allowing a minimum of 100sqft per person for all people in the venue. This applies to organised indoor (individual and team) sports, indoor exercise classes and organised sports participation events.

■ Local Broadcasting: Radio

Virginia Crosbie: [1416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to (a) MônFM on Anglesey and (b) other community radio stations which have provided a vital service to the community during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government is strongly supportive of community radio. Community stations such as Môn FM have played a key role in keeping listeners informed and entertained during the coronavirus pandemic, and we are extremely grateful for the level of commitment shown by the sector in continuing to make connections within its communities during these difficult times.

We are, of course, very conscious of the impact that the pandemic has had on revenues within the sector, which is why we released a total of £600,000 in emergency funding through the Community Radio Fund in 2020/21 to help a significant number of stations to meet their immediate financial obligations. While the application windows for that funding have now closed, the Community Radio Fund will be allocating a further £400,000 in 2021/22 to support stations that can demonstrate that a grant would help to further their financial stability and future sustainability. Ofcom administer this Fund on behalf of DCMS, and further information about it can be found on [their website](#).

■ Music: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy: [416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of when it will be safe for community music rehearsals to resume as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Caroline Dinéage:

It is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions, so that we can see the impact of the steps we are taking before moving to the next step. From 17 May, non-professional performing arts activities are permitted indoors and outdoors, within the legal gathering limits. Activities should be organised to allow for social distancing to be maintained.

Outdoors, people can take part in non-professional performing arts activities in a group of up to 30 people. Activities can take place with multiple permitted groups, provided the groups are kept separate throughout the activity, and the event is organised in line with the [organised events guidance for local authorities](#)

Indoors, people can take part in non-professional performing arts activities in a group of up to 6 people, or as a group of 2 households/bubbles. Activities can take place with multiple permitted groups, provided the groups are kept separate throughout the activity, and the event is organised in line with the [organised events guidance for local authorities](#). However, non-professional singing indoors should only take place in a single group of up to 6 people.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Christian Wakeford:

[568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that businesses are included in his Department's plans for a literacy recovery strategy.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education. We are committed to helping pupils make up education lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak. To address this challenge, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, committed to working with parents, teachers, schools and colleges to develop a long-term plan to help schools and colleges support pupils to make up their education over the course of this Parliament.

In addition, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on the development of the long-term recovery plan. Sir Kevan will engage with parents, pupils, and teachers in advising on the development of this plan and review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on education. Further details will be shared in due course.

On literacy specifically, the Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards, ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding. The Government will continue to work closely with a wide range of organisations, including businesses, to achieve this aim, and values the contribution of businesses to supporting children's education. For example, in June 2020 we announced a £1 billion catch-up package, including a National Tutoring Programme and a catch-up premium for this academic year. In February 2021, we committed to further funding of £700 million to fund summer schools, the expansion of our tutoring programmes, and a recovery premium for the next academic year. Funding will support pupils across nurseries, schools, and 16-19 colleges.

■ Academies: School Meals**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[1185]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with academy schools charging parents for school meals (a) over period where schools were closed as a result of covid-19 restrictions and (b) at increased rates while schools were open compared with pre-pandemic rates.

Vicky Ford:

Schools are responsible for setting the prices at which they charge parents for the provision of school meals. This must, however, be within the parameters set under the law.

State-funded schools, including all academies apart from 16-19 academies, must provide meals for all registered pupils upon request and meals must be provided free of charge for those who meet the entitlement conditions for free school meals.

Where schools charge for meals, the prices they charge should not exceed the costs they have incurred in providing those meals.

If parents or pupils at a school feel they are being charged unfairly, they should contact the school at first instance and follow the steps in the school's complaints procedure. If, having done this, they feel that their complaint was not dealt with correctly, they can ask the Department for Education to consider their complaint using the following link:

https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education.

■ Children: Disability**Wera Hobhouse:****[402]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 12 April 2021 to Question 179332, whether any of the £700 million catch-up funding will be allocated specifically to tackle social isolation in disabled children as part of wider covid-19 recovery plans.

Nick Gibb:

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are disproportionately affected by being out of education, including missing out on important social interaction with their peers. The Department has kept schools open for vulnerable children, including those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), during periods of national lockdown.

As part of the £1.7 billion funding announced so far for education recovery, the £302 million Recovery Premium will help schools to deliver evidence-based approaches for supporting the most disadvantaged pupils. We have applied additional weighting to special schools, alternative provision and hospital schools to recognise the significantly higher per pupil costs they face. Eligible pupils attending special units within mainstream schools will also attract the higher funding rate.

All schools should use the Recovery Premium funding available to them as a single total from which to prioritise support for particular pupils, including children with SEND or education, health and care plans, according to their need.

In addition, the National Tutoring Programme is a key part of the Government's COVID-19 catch-up response and provides additional, targeted tuition to disadvantaged children who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. People with SEND aged 19 to 24 who have an EHCP will be eligible for support via the 16 to 19 tuition fund, where they meet the fund criteria. Schools are asked to have regard to the needs of students with SEND when prioritising students that would benefit most for small group tuition.

The Department is also making £200 million available to all secondary schools, including specialist schools, to deliver face to face summer schools, providing opportunities for social interaction. Summer schools funding includes an uplift for pupils in special schools, maintained units in mainstream schools and alternative provision. Guidance for schools includes advice on helping to make a summer school accessible to vulnerable children and those with additional needs.

■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Esther McVey:

[226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessments his Department made to inform decisions on reopening (a) secondary schools and (b) university campuses as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Nick Gibb:

At every stage since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, decisions have been informed by the scientific and medical evidence, including the risk of COVID-19 infection, transmission and illness, and the known risks to children and young people not attending school.

On 22 February the Department published its COVID-19 evidence summary which is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf.

The return of the remaining university students is not considered in isolation but as part of the Government's overall roadmap. All areas included in the roadmap, as well as higher education, are informed by advice from scientific and medical experts, where data and evidence are considered regularly. This includes the Joint Biosecurity Centre, Public Health England, and the Chief Medical Officers.

The Department is working closely with scientists and The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) to understand and model various scenarios to inform plans that seek 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.

SAGE also regularly publish papers and minutes following each SAGE meeting, including a collection of papers from the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, on the re-opening of schools and the Independent Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours on return to campus for the spring terms and the risk of increased transmission from student migration. The list of papers published are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

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 on the Pfizer vaccinations effectiveness and reports with detailed findings from Sarscov2 Immunity & REinfection EvaluationN (SIREN) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections-Watch.

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus

Esther McVey:

[225]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Higher education coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance published on 10 May 2021, if he will publish the evidential basis for the return to in-person teaching and learning being no earlier than 17 May 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

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 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 considered all the scientific advice and models that suggested that allowing additional indoor mixing at an earlier stage when prevalence was higher and fewer people had been vaccinated could result in significantly higher numbers of infections and that is why restrictions outdoors were eased before restrictions on most indoor activity. As the number of people vaccinated increased, we have been able to take steps to ease restrictions further.

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 the following 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 Sarscov2 Immunity and Reinfection Evaluation (SIREN) 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 University and Imperial College London
- A collection of papers from SPI-M on "relaxation of Non-pharmaceutical interventions and the re-opening of schools" and the Scientific Pandemic 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

Additional papers published by SAGE in relation to Step 3 of the roadmap can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sage-meetings-may-2021>.

■ Higher Education: Greater London

Apsana Begum:

[894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Office for Students' plans to exclude the London allowance factor in the calculation for relevant London-based higher education providers on the quality of teaching at London universities.

Michelle Donelan:

The Strategic Priorities Grant, formerly referred to as the Teaching Grant, plays an important role in supporting providers and students to develop the skills and knowledge needed locally, regionally, and nationally to support the economy.

We have asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the Grant for the 2021-22 financial year. These reforms include the reallocation of high-cost subject funding towards the provision of high-cost subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost STEM subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs.

The London weighting accounts for a small proportion of London-providers' income. Providers in London received around £64 million London Weighting in the 2020-21 academic year, which is less than 1% of their estimated total income.

London universities will be able to benefit from the significant uplifts we are making to elements of the Strategic Priorities Grant, including the first real terms increase in years in per capita funding for high-cost subjects in grant funding, as well as being able to bid for capital investment to support the delivery of strategic subjects.

We have also asked the OfS for a £10 million increase to the specialist provider allocation, to support these institutions which are particularly reliant on Strategic Priorities Grant funding, many of whom are London-based. We want to ensure that our small and specialist providers, including some of our top music and arts providers, receive additional support, and that grant funding is used to effectively support students.

The OfS has now publicly consulted on these proposals, and responses from universities, students and others will be taken into account before any final decisions on allocations are made.

■ Home Education: Standards

Munira Wilson: [\[470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a statutory register for children receiving an elective home education.

Munira Wilson: [\[471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that children who are being educated at home are receiving an appropriate and effective education.

Munira Wilson: [\[472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department provides to local authorities to ensure that children receiving home education achieve expected key educational milestones.

Munira Wilson: [\[473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on the attainment of children of elective home education.

Munira Wilson: [\[475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the safeguarding processes for children receiving an elective home education.

Munira Wilson: [\[476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what safeguarding measures are in place to protect the wellbeing of children receiving an elective home education.

Nick Gibb:

The safeguarding of children who are electively home educated sits within a local authority's safeguarding duties, as set out in the Children Act 1989. The provision of home education itself does not constitute a safeguarding risk, although a failure to provide suitable home education can impair a child's intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development.

The Government has substantially strengthened its guidance to local authorities on exercising their powers in relation to elective home education. The revised guidance, which was published in April 2019, sets out the steps that local authorities should take to satisfy themselves that the education provided by parents at home is suitable, and the actions that they can take if they are not satisfied. This guidance will be reviewed again in due course.

The Government remains committed to a registration system for children not in school. A consultation was held in spring 2019 on proposals for: a mandatory register of children not attending state or registered independent schools to help local authorities carry out their responsibilities in relation to children not in school; a duty on parents to register their child with their local authority if not registered at specified types of schools; a duty on proprietors of certain education settings to respond to enquiries from local authorities; and a duty on local authorities to provide support to parents who educate children at home.

The consultation closed on 24 June 2019, with nearly 5,000 responses. Further details on a proposed registration system for children not in school will be in the Government's response to the consultation, which we intend to publish in due course.

The Department does not collect data on attainment of home educated children.

■ Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education**Nicola Richards:**[\[565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to introduce misogyny and the treatment of women onto the national curriculum in Personal, Social, Health and Economic education for children aged 11 to 16.

Nick Gibb:

The Department wants to support all young people to lead happy, healthy and safe lives and to foster respect for other people and for difference. That is why the Department has made the new subjects of Relationships Education (for primary school pupils), Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary school pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) compulsory from September 2020.

The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance specifically advises schools to be alive to issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes, and to take positive action to tackle these issues. Statutory guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

In primary schools, age-appropriate relationships education involves supporting children to learn about what healthy relationships are and their importance, as well as how to develop mutually respectful relationships in all contexts, including online. In secondary schools, relationships education broadens to become age-appropriate relationships and sex education and will include factual knowledge around sex, sexual health, and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

Specifically, at secondary school pupils should be taught about the concepts of and laws relating to sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation.

To support teachers to deliver these topics safely and with confidence we have produced RSHE Teacher Training Modules which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>. Each module covers safeguarding to make sure teachers, pastoral staff and the designated safeguarding lead are equipped to deal with sensitive discussions and potential disclosures.

■ **Sure Start Programme: Kirklees**

Kate Green: [1313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many designated Sure Start children's centres there were in Kirklees District Council area in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Vicky Ford:

Based on the information supplied by local authorities as at 17 May 2021, the attached table sets out the number of children's centres sites in Kirklees in 2010 and 2020.

Attachments:

1. PQ 1313: Number of children's centres in Kirklees
[PQ_1313_table_listing_childrens_centres_in_Kirklees_in_2010_and_2020.xls]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Sajid Javid: [201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to work with rural communities to tackle fly-tipping.

Rebecca Pow:

Fly-tipping is a crime which affects all of society, including rural communities and private landowners, and we are committed to tacking this unacceptable behaviour

We appreciate the difficulty and cost that fly-tipping poses to landowners and we work with a wide range of interested parties through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG), such as the National Farmers Union, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Countryside Alliance and the Countryside Landowners Association, to promote and disseminate good practice, including advice on how to prevent fly-tipping on private land which can be found at:

[NFTPGAdviceforLandowners.pdf \(tacklingflytipping.com\)](#)

We are also working with the NFTPG to develop a fly-tipping toolkit to help local authorities, landowners and others work in partnership to tackle this crime.

We expect local authorities to investigate all incidents of fly-tipping, including those on private land; prosecuting fly-tippers when there is sufficient evidence and recovering investigation, enforcement and clearance costs where possible

Budget 2020 allocated up to £2 million to support innovative solutions to tackle fly-tipping. In April 2021 we commissioned a research project considering the drivers, deterrents and impacts of fly-tipping tipping, which will include consideration of rural areas. This research project is due to be completed before the end of this year and will support informed policy making. We are exploring additional funding opportunities and priorities, including considering the role of digital solutions.

We are taking forward the commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy to develop proposals for the reform of the waste carrier, broker, and dealer regime. We are currently working with industry and the regulator and we intend to consult later this year. We also intend to consult on the introduction of mandatory electronic waste tracking. Digital records of waste movements will allow regulators to detect when waste does not reach the next stage, which may help to identify illegal activity including fly-tipping.

The Environment Bill will help us to use our resources more efficiently and reduce the amount of waste we produce. It will enable us to fundamentally change the way we use resources, including increasing rates of recycling and making the products we use every day more durable and easier to recycle.

Chris Elmore:

[392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the level of waste from single-use nappies.

Chris Elmore:

[393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the introduction of reusable nappy incentive schemes in local authorities.

Rebecca Pow:

In line with the 25 Year Environment Plan, and our Resources and Waste Strategy, we are considering the best approach to minimise the environmental impact of a range of products, including nappies, taking on board the environmental and social impacts of the options available. Potential additional policy measures include

standards, consumer information and encouraging voluntary action by business. We are seeking powers, through the Environment Bill, that will enable us to, where appropriate and subject to consultation, introduce ecodesign and consumer information requirements. This could include labelling schemes that provide accurate information to consumers, to drive the market towards more sustainable products.

The decision on whether to support local reusable nappy schemes is one for local authorities. To help them better understand the merits of doing so, as well as for our understanding, we are funding an environmental assessment of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products with the primary focus on nappies. This is looking at the waste and energy impacts of washable and disposable products, disposal to landfill or incineration, and recycling options. Information is being gathered from industry to help with this. I have recently met representatives of the Nappy Alliance and will be meeting disposable nappy business representatives shortly. The research will be published in the summer, following peer review, and will help inform possible future action on nappies by the Government and industry.

Chris Elmore:

[\[394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the public's awareness of how to dispose of single-use nappies.

Rebecca Pow:

We would advise members of the public to carefully read and follow the disposal instructions provided by the manufacturers of single use nappies. Used nappies should be disposed of in the residual waste bin and not placed in recycling bins where they can contaminate other material.

■ Crops

Luke Pollard:

[\[1385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the volume of crops that went unpicked in fields in 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra produces annual estimates of horticultural crop production. These estimates include tonnage, value and imports/exports which allow the Government to monitor productivity and competitiveness within the industry, including supply and self-sufficiency. The latest data we have is 2019. These are available on gov.uk

There are a number of reasons why crops may be unharvested, for example weather, pest and disease or drop in demand. No estimates are made for the tonnage of crops left unharvested. As a result, no data is available to answer this question.

We have regular contact with stakeholders to understand live issues as they develop.

■ Fisheries: Seasonal Workers

Claire Hanna: [\[1405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of seasonal workers employed annually within the fishing industry in (a) UK ports in total, (b) Ardglass and (c) Kilkeel ports.

Claire Hanna: [\[1406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the new immigration rules on the fishing industry.

Claire Hanna: [\[1407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending immigration exemptions for seasonal workers to the fishing industry.

Victoria Prentis:

A Seafish survey found seasonal workers accounted for 6% of all fishers in UK ports in 2018. This included three seasonal workers in Kilkeel and none in Ardglass. We have made no assessment on the effect of the new immigration rules on the fishing industry introduced on 6 April 2021.

We have not assessed the merits of extending the Seasonal Workers Pilot to the fishing industry given the comparatively lower numbers of seasonal workers in fishing compared to other food production industries. EU nationals who have settled status can continue to travel to the UK to do seasonal work in 2021.

■ Insects: Environment Protection

Rachael Maskell: [\[350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring the gardens of publicly-owned buildings to be more environmentally friendly for bees and other insects.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government works with public, private and voluntary sector partners to develop advice so that everyone can provide and manage nesting and feeding resources for bees and other insects, whether in gardens or the wider countryside.

Our advice is based on clear evidence that by increasing habitat for insects, we support long-term population increases. As part of the National Pollinator Strategy, we promote this advice through the 'Bees' Needs' website and our annual 'Bees' Needs Week' campaign to celebrate and encourage nationwide action.

All public bodies, including local authorities, have a legal duty under the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to have regard to conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions. Our Environment Bill strengthens that duty to require

public authorities to take steps to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

In addition, the Greening Government Commitments set out a number of environmental commitments across the estates and operations of central Government departments and their partner organisations, including the need to report publicly on the steps they are taking to address biodiversity and the natural environment. We aim to publish a new framework of commitments for 2021-25 in due course. This will ensure the central Government estate, and its operations, continues to reduce its environmental footprint, aligns with commitments in our 25 Year Environment Plan and will be consistent with a trajectory to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. As part of this, we are exploring a range of measures aimed at improving biodiversity and nature recovery across the central government estate.

■ Lighting: Pollution

Luke Pollard:

[\[435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) levels of light pollution across the UK and (b) effect that pollution has on (i) people and (ii) wildlife.

Rebecca Pow:

a) Defra's last major review of light pollution was the January 2014 publication of a policy update on artificial light in the environment. Since then we have worked with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework policies include consideration of the impact of light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Defra has also contributed to the development of the MHCLG Planning Policy Guidance on light pollution published in November 2019.

b) (i) Public Health England carried out a study in 2016 for the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers and the Society of Light and Lighting, which included an assessment of light-emitting diode (LED) streetlights on health. The study concluded that some LED streetlight luminaires emitted more blue light than was necessary, but that there was no evidence of direct adverse health effects on people.

(ii) Defra has published or contributed to a range of assessments of the impact of artificial light on insects, and wider biodiversity, as well as global and national assessments of the drivers of biodiversity loss more generally.

There have been a number of externally funded studies which have highlighted potential impacts of artificial light pollution on insects and invertebrates, which Defra keeps under review, for example, with our academic partners on the National Pollinator Strategy for England.

■ Maps

James Daly:

[552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps are available in the event that a local authority does not give a ruling on a Definitive Map Modification Order within a reasonable timeframe.

Rebecca Pow:

Anyone who has applied to the local highway authority for a modification to the area's definitive map and statement and has not been advised of the authority's decision within 12 months, can apply in writing to the Secretary of State for a direction. The Secretary of State may direct the authority to decide the application by a certain date.

The decisions are made by a Planning Inspector on behalf of the Secretary of State, and a link to this guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schedule-14-direction-apply-to-the-secretary-of-state-for-a-direction>

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Rachael Maskell:

[339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the United Nations Special Envoy for Myanmar in response to the military coup in that country, what coordinated international response he has agreed to beyond the Association of Southeast Asian Nation's five-point plan.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has led a strong, coordinated international response, including through our G7 Presidency and our leadership role on Myanmar at the UN Security Council. On 10 March, the UK secured a Presidential Statement at the UN Security Council which condemned the violence against peaceful protestors. On 12 February and 24 March we secured strong consensus resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council. We secured G7 statements on 3 and 23 February, as well as strong wording on Myanmar in the G7 communiqué on 5 May. The UK, in conjunction with partners including the US and Canada, have announced targeted sanctions against the regime. On 17 May the UK sanctioned Myanmar Gems Enterprise (MGE), for its role in funding the junta. These sanctions are the first under the new Myanmar sanctions regulations laid in parliament on 29 April. They demonstrate the UK's commitment to targeting the military junta's funding streams to put pressure on them to immediately end the coup. These sanctions follow the designations of nine high-ranking military officials and two Military linked conglomerates.

We welcome ASEAN's Five Point Consensus on Myanmar and ASEAN's unique role in addressing the crisis and supported ASEAN's call for an end to violence, for

restraint, and for a peaceful resolution, in line with the purpose and principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. The military must implement this plan without delay.

Stephen Morgan: [420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will take steps to ensure that British citizens living in Thailand will have access to a vaccination for covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

We are in close contact with the Government of Thailand on the provision of Covid-19 vaccinations to British nationals. The Thai Government have informed our Embassy that they will start public rollout of vaccinations imminently and that they will make vaccinations available to all foreign nationals in Thailand, including British nationals. We are providing information on Thailand's plans through the FCDO's Thailand Travel Advice page and 'Living In' guide on gov.uk.

Damien Moore: [R] [429]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of support in the UK for parliamentary democracy in Tunisia.

Damien Moore: [R] [430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the Government of Tunisia in developing and strengthening democracy in (a) parliament and (b) other democratic institutions.

Damien Moore: [R] [431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the UK's role in securing continued prosperity, security and stability across the Maghreb region as part of ongoing diplomatic relations with Tunisia.

Damien Moore: [R] [432]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional steps his Department is taking to support the Government of Tunisia to (a) reform the economy of and (b) tackle the covid-19 outbreak in that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK works closely with Tunisia to support political and economic reform, bolster democratic institutions, and build the country's resilience as part of a broad and growing partnership. We have supported the democratic transition through helping to build the capacity of parliamentarians and officials. We are providing £4m over 3 years through the British Council to fund English language training and to help young Tunisians gain important job skills. We are also working with the World Bank to support macro-economic reforms.

The UK has a strong partnership with Tunisia on security issues, which has helped strengthen our response to the shared challenges of terrorism and extremism, and to work together to address the conflict in Libya.

The UK is supporting the Tunisian Government to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, including by helping it to secure vaccines through COVAX. Other initiatives include supporting the Tunisian Ministry of Health on their vaccine rollout as part of a World Bank-led initiative, providing support to small and medium businesses, and ensuring access to services and social security for the most vulnerable people.

Kim Johnson:

[515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) hold discussions with the Moroccan Ambassador and (b) instruct HM Ambassador to Morocco to raise with the Moroccan authorities the reported raid and assault of the home of the Saharawi human rights activist Sultana Khaya on 10 May 2021.

Kim Johnson:

[516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) hold discussions with the Moroccan Ambassador and (b) instruct HM Ambassador to Morocco to raise with the Moroccan authorities the arrest of the Saharawi activists (i) Khaled Boufraya, (ii) Salek Baber and (iii) Babuizid Muhammed Saaed Labhi; and determine where they are being held.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports concerning Sultana Khaya, as well as the arrests of Khaled Boufraya, Salek Baber and Babuizid Muhammed Saaed Labhi. We are monitoring these cases. 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.

Kim Johnson:

[517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 1 March 2021 to Question 155452 on Western Sahara: Politics and Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the United Nation's designation of Western Sahara as a Non-Self-Governing Territory.

James Cleverly:

we note the UN's position on the status of Western Sahara, which is set out on its website: <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsqt/western-sahara>. As the Foreign Secretary stated on 11 December 2020, the UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/israel-and-morocco-uk-responds-to-announcement-of-normalisation>.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[529]

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

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government remains deeply concerned by reports of discrimination and violence against religious communities in Pakistan, including against the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. We continue to urge the government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, regardless of their religion or belief.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, raised our concerns about the recent murders of Ahmadi Muslims with Pakistan's Special Representative for Religious Harmony, Tahir Ashrafi, on 23 March. Lord Ahmad also raised our concerns about the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 20 February. In addition, Officials from the British High Commission in Islamabad met with representatives from the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Rabwah on 3 November 2020, in order to understand and engage with their concerns.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle Ahmadi persecution in Bangladesh.

Nigel Adams:

The UK government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities.

Bangladesh is a human rights priority country for the FCDO. Ministers and our High Commission in Dhaka regularly raise human rights concerns as part of continued dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh. The UK supports community leaders in Bangladesh to address the causes and effects of inter-religious, ethnic and political conflict. Our development programming supports citizen groups in 31 districts across the country to come together to resolve grievances, mitigate religious violence and advocate for inclusive and peaceful co-existence.

While Bangladesh is a secular people's republic with formal guarantees of religious freedom, we recognise the risk of religious persecution faced by Ahmadiyya Muslims and other groups in Bangladesh, and actively engage with minority communities to understand their concerns. We will continue to monitor this closely and advocate for FoRB as well as other human rights.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department has spent on promoting freedom of religion in (a) Africa and (b) Asia in each of the last three years.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities.

Resources dedicated to FoRB work in Africa and Asia, including staff time, are not recorded centrally, but we have a number of human rights-related activities that contribute to supporting the FoRB agenda. This includes two targeted FoRB programmes through UK Aid Connect where we have spent £482,628, £1,683,095 and £2,785,822 in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. The programmes are delivered by the Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development which is led by the Institute of Development Studies, and the Freedom of Religion and Belief Leadership Network, managed by the University of Oxford. Both programmes have reach in Africa and Asia.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of reports that Christian nurses Mariam Lal and Navish Aroojtwo in Faisalabad, Pakistan, have been charged under that country's blasphemy statutes.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Pakistani counterpart on the effect of blasphemy laws on religious and belief minorities in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about reports of discrimination against the Christian community and other religious minorities in Pakistan. We regularly raise at a senior level our concerns regarding blasphemy laws with the Government of Pakistan. On 23 March, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, discussed Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Special Representative for Religious Harmony, Tahir Ashrafi. On 20 February, Lord Ahmad raised our concerns about the protection of minority religious communities, including the use of blasphemy laws, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari. We will continue to urge the government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, regardless of their religion or belief.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to encourage the Pakistani Government to appoint a new leader of Pakistan's National Commission for Human Rights since the ruling of the

Islamabad High Court accusing the Pakistani Government of deliberately obstructing the Commission by leaving it leaderless.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is committed to promoting human rights in Pakistan and around the globe. We regularly urge the government of Pakistan at a senior level to guarantee the rights of all people in Pakistan as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, responsible for human rights, raised our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 20 February 2021.

We will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to take the steps necessary to comply in full with its human rights obligations. This includes ensuring the effective operation of institutional human rights structures and processes.

■ **Armenia: Azerbaijan**

Catherine West:

[\[1344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of recent reports that Azerbaijani forces have entered Armenian territory; and whether he has raised this matter with the (a) Armenian and (b) Azerbaijani governments.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is closely monitoring the situation on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border following an increase in tensions. We welcome the ongoing communication between the parties and urge them to use this opportunity to de-escalate the situation peacefully. The UK Government fully supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to secure a fully negotiated, sustainable and peaceful settlement to the conflict.

■ **China: Overseas Aid**

Sarah Champion:

[\[256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what programmes will be funded by the UK's Official Development Assistance Budget in China in 2021-22; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of that funding.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign Secretary set out in his Written Ministerial Statement on 21 April that we have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world, following a thorough review against a challenging financial climate of COVID-19. We have cut FCDO aid programming to China by 95 per cent in 2021-2022, focusing the remaining programme funding on specific programmes that support British values around open societies and human rights.

There will be additional ODA in this year only to meet the contractual exit costs of former programmes.

■ Developing Countries: Education

Sarah Champion:

[\[1077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the announcement by the Government on 12 May 2021 of £55 million of funding for The What Works Hub for Global Education, over what period that funding will be spent; and whether that funding forms part of the £400 million for girls' education announced in the Written Statement of 21 April 2021, HCWS935 on UK Official Development Assistance departmental allocations 2021-22.

Wendy Morton:

The What Works Hub for Global Education is a multi-year investment, with £55 million planned over 8 years. A small proportion of it will be spent in this financial year, contributing to the £400 million for girls' education as announced in the Written Ministerial Statement of 21 April 2021.

The Hub will drive more effective education spending by both national governments and donor funds to improve learning outcomes for girls (and boys). It will do this through supporting governments in using evidence in a way that accurately identifies the barriers to learning, and tailors solutions to specific contexts.

■ Education: Females

Jim Shannon:

[\[1063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's policy paper, Policy paper, Every girl goes to school, stay safe, and learns: five years of global action 2021 to 2026, published on 12 May 2021, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of UNAIDS in ensuring that all girls finish secondary school which is evidenced to decrease the risk of HIV infection; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that girls can access a reinforcing package of rights and empowerment.

Wendy Morton:

The UK regularly consults with civil society organisations and shares their determination to advocate for the rights and needs of the most marginalised groups affected by HIV. The UK remains committed to addressing HIV and AIDS through our commitments to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and malaria and our work on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). We remain committed to a strong UNAIDS and we are fully engaged in the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

■ Equal Rights Coalition

Emily Thornberry:

[\[1277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which countries have been selected to succeed the UK and Argentina as co-chairs of the Equal Rights Coalition; and when their terms in office will begin.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to working with our international partners to promote and protect the rights of LGBT+ people. The UK and Argentina extended their tenure as Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) co-chairs by one year until June 2022 to compensate for the limitations imposed on many ERC governments during most of 2020 due to COVID 19. Succession planning remains an ERC Executive Committee priority.

The Five Year Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) Strategy was shared with ERC Member States on 29 April, to be operationalised at a virtual ERC conference on 6 and 7 July 2021, where considerations around publication will be agreed.

Emily Thornberry:[\[1278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department's five year strategy for the Equal Rights Coalition will be (a) agreed with other members and (b) published.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to working with our international partners to promote and protect the rights of LGBT+ people. The UK and Argentina extended their tenure as Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) co-chairs by one year until June 2022 to compensate for the limitations imposed on many ERC governments during most of 2020 due to COVID 19. Succession planning remains an ERC Executive Committee priority.

The Five Year Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) Strategy was shared with ERC Member States on 29 April, to be operationalised at a virtual ERC conference on 6 and 7 July 2021, where considerations around publication will be agreed.

■ Eritrea: Diplomatic Relations**Patrick Grady:**[\[307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will list the occasions on which UK (a) Ministers and (b) officials have met with the Ambassador of Eritrea to the Court of St James's in each year since 2010.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: FCDO Ministers have met the Eritrean Ambassador three times in the last three years. These were: a virtual meeting with Minister Duddridge in March 2021, a virtual meeting with Africa Union Heads of Mission, also March, which the Eritrean Ambassador chaired as Dean, and a bilateral meeting of the then Minister for Africa in 2019. Senior officials have also met the Eritrean Ambassador four times in the last three years. Information for the period 2010 - 2017 is not readily available, but we estimate that Ministerial and senior official contact was very limited during this period.

■ Ethiopia: Politics and Government

Sarah Champion:

[\[255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reported spreading instability in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We remain concerned by the impact of the continued fighting in the Tigray region and growing ethnic and political tensions and violence elsewhere in Ethiopia.

Since the conflict in Tigray started, the UK has consistently called for an end to fighting, and for all parties to the conflict to prioritise the protection of civilians. We have and will continue to advocate for a political process. A political process is essential to bring an end to the fighting, and agree a sustainable settlement for Tigray. On our most recent visits to Ethiopia both the Foreign Secretary and I pressed on these issues, and also raised concerns about wider political freedoms in Ethiopia.

Most recently, I raised the elections delay to President Sahle-Work on 17 May during the France Africa Summit in Paris. On 14 April, the British Ambassador, alongside Ambassadors and representatives from other Embassies in Addis Ababa, met the Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General. In this meeting the British Ambassador raised concerns about the narrowing of political and civic space across Ethiopia. We will continue to champion open and free political expression and discourse as the best means to resolve conflict in Ethiopia, in Tigray and beyond.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Termination of Employment

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of the 219 employees who have left his Department since October 2020 were former staff of the (a) Department for International Development and (b) Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: FCDO leavers data is not currently published externally. As part of the FCDO's annual report & accounts, we expect to publish the change in the FCDO's headcount and average FTE for the financial year 2020-21.

■ Gaza: Israel

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of deaths of (a) children, (b) non-combatant adults and (c) combatant adults in Gaza following military action by Israel beginning on 11 May 2021.

James Cleverly:

The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning. Civilian deaths, both in Israel and Gaza are a tragedy. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop, and every effort must be made to avoid loss of life, especially that of children.

The UK condemns the firing of rockets at civilian populations and we urge all parties to de-escalate immediately. Any attacks targeted against civilians are unlawful and unjustifiable. All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties.

India: Coronavirus**Naz Shah:**[\[290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what aid and support the Government is providing to India during their latest outbreak of covid-19 cases.

Nigel Adams:

We stand side by side with India as a friend and partner in the fight against COVID-19, and send our solidarity and condolences to the Indian people at this difficult time. Working closely with the Indian Government, the UK has put together a package focusing on India's most urgent needs, including oxygen concentrators, ventilators, and oxygen generating units. The first shipment was delivered on 27 April. On 2 May, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would send a further 1,000 ventilators to support India's response, these arrived in Delhi on 9 May bringing the total package of equipment to 495 oxygen concentrators, 1,200 ventilators and three oxygen generating units.

There is also extensive scientific and medical collaboration underway. Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance have spoken to their Indian counterparts to provide advice, insight and expertise to the Indian healthcare system as it deals with the surge in Covid-19 cases. NHS England and NHS Improvement are establishing a clinic advisory group, led by Chief People Officer Prerana Issar, to support India's Covid-19 response.

Iraq: Turkey**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[1360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the reported (a) Turkish military campaign in Iraq and (b) plans to open Turkish military bases in Zap, Metina and Avashin.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:[\[1361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation for Kurdish civilians in Northern Iraq in the context of the current Turkish military campaign which began on 24 April 2021.

James Cleverly:

The UK is closely following the situation in northern Iraq. We welcome recent discussions between Iraqi and Turkish Defence Ministers regarding Ankara's military operations against the PKK in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The safety of civilians is paramount and the UK continues to urge dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to protect civilians. We respect Iraqi sovereignty, and acknowledge Turkey's security concerns regarding the PKK whilst ensuring regional security and combatting terrorism.

■ Israel: Gaza**Hilary Benn:**[\[65\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the reported civilian casualties resulting from the recent airstrikes on Gaza.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 11 and 16 May, and to Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and Palestinian Head of Mission in London to urge them to de-escalate and restore calm.

All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. We continue to call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. Any attacks targeted against civilians are unlawful and unjustifiable. Our priority now must be an immediate de-escalation on all sides, and an end to the killing of civilians.

Hywel Williams:[\[73\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with (a) his Israeli counterparts, (b) Gazan authorities and (c) the Palestinian Authority to de-escalate and end the recent violence in that region.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 11 and 16 May, and to Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and Palestinian Head of Mission in London to urge them to de-escalate and restore calm. We have also engaged Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar and the UN to support their efforts to mediate.

UK embassies throughout the Middle East are engaging regional partners, and we remain in close contact with the US administration and European allies. Our priority now must be an immediate de-escalation on all sides, and an end to the killing of civilians.

■ Israel: Iran

Jim Shannon: [\[239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with NATO on the recent attack on an Israeli vessel by Iran.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to ensuring the safety of shipping and to maintaining the principle of freedom of navigation. Growing tensions around strategic maritime choke points threatens the ability of trade to safely pass through international waters. The UK continues to underline the need for a reduction in tensions on all sides. This incident has not been the subject of Ministerial discussion at NATO.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Zarah Sultana: [\[880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the ICC enquiry into war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a strong supporter of the ICC and we respect the independence of the Court and its officials. In this instance we do not consider that the ICC has jurisdiction. We continue to closely follow the ICC's work and are looking at the implications of this decision.

■ Jerusalem: Palestinians

Hywel Williams: [\[74\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the legality under international law of Israeli efforts to evict Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises forced evictions of Palestinians from property with the Government of Israel. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

I publicised on the 8 May outlining our concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. The

current threat to communities in Sheikh Jarrah is allayed for now. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions. UK Officials at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv continue to raise the issue regularly with the Israeli Authorities.

Zarah Sultana:

[886]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the displacement of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah.

James Cleverly:

I publicised on 8 May outlining our concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions, which in all but the most exceptional cases are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. I also spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and to the Palestinian Head of Mission in London to urge them to de-escalate, restore calm and reiterate our position on this issue. UK Officials at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv continue to raise the issue regularly with the Israeli Authorities.

■ **Mikhail Gutseriev**

Sarah Olney:

[1157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will place sanctions on Russian businessman Mikhail Gutseriev in response to his funding of the Belarussian regime and president Alexander Lukashenko.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response towards the fraudulent election and human rights violations in Belarus. Alongside Canada, we led on implementing sanctions against Lukashenko and his inner circle under the UK's Global Human Rights Regime. We have also carried over the EU's Belarus sanctions regime into UK law. We are aware of reported links between Mr Gutseriev and the Lukashenko regime but to preserve the integrity of the sanctions process, it would be inappropriate to speculate publicly on future designations.

■ **Muslim Brotherhood**

Andrew Rosindell:

[94]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of recent developments in Turkish-Egyptian relations on the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the (a) MENA region and (b) Europe.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomes recent engagement between Turkey and Egypt. We will continue to follow developments. We have not made any assessment of the impact of these developments on the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the MENA region and Europe.

■ Myanmar: Health Services**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to support partnership schemes in Myanmar between UK and local clinicians.

Nigel Adams:

In recent years, the UK funded the Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Trust which helped to enhance health collaboration between UK and Myanmar institutions. The UK has also funded work by the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET), through the UK Partnerships for Health Systems programme to share skills and knowledge between the UK and Myanmar.

We are committed to looking at innovative ways to share skills and knowledge between the UK and Myanmar, and will engage with THET to try to identify future opportunities to support this.

■ Nepal: Coronavirus**Sarah Champion:** [\[257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 in Nepal; and what (a) practical assistance and (b) expertise support the Government will offer that country to support its efforts against covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is one of the leading donors to Covax, committing £548m to the scheme, which will provide more than a billion vaccines to developing countries including doses for almost a fifth of Nepal's population. The UK has funded a new £180,000 duplex oxygen generation plant at the Nepal Police Hospital in Kathmandu to help address oxygen shortages to treat COVID19 patients. The UK is providing £15m of support to international NGOs and the UN to provide shelter, nutrition and other critical needs in Nepal - including cash and voucher assistance to 220,000 vulnerable people's basic needs, nutrition support to 120,000 pregnant and lactating women and infants, 400,000 people with WASH (UNICEF's water, sanitation and hygiene) support, and 210 truckloads of relief supplies to 52 different destinations.

■ Spain: British Nationals Abroad**Julian Sturdy:** [\[693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government has to negotiate a bilateral agreement with Spain to allow UK nationals to have the same right to travel there visa-free for 180 days..

Wendy Morton:

During negotiations with the EU, the Government discussed arrangements for British Citizens travelling to the Schengen Area. Regrettably, the EU consistently maintained

that British Citizens will be treated as Third Country Nationals under the Schengen Borders Code from 1 January 2021. This means that British Citizens are able to travel visa-free for short stays for up to 90 days in a rolling 180-day period. This is the standard length of stay that the EU offers to nationals of eligible third countries, in line with existing EU legislation. British Citizens who are planning to stay longer than 90 days in a rolling 180-day period will need permission from the relevant Member State. This may require applying for a visa and/or permit.

The UK's Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU notes that both the UK and EU currently provide for visa-free travel for short-term visits for each other's nationals in accordance with their respective laws. The detail of those arrangements is set by domestic law, reflecting the UK's position as a non-EU Member State. The Government does not typically enter into bilateral agreements on visa-free travel.

■ Sri Lanka: Community Policing

Kenny MacAskill:

[460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the remarks of Sri Lanka's Minister of Community Police Services, Dilum Amunugama, on Sri Lanka's president acting like Adolf Hitler on 12 April 2021, what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of the UK providing Sri Lanka with community policing training.

Nigel Adams:

All UK police assistance in Sri Lanka is subject to robust Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) assessments that analyse the potential human rights, international humanitarian law, political and reputational risks of any proposed assistance to ensure that it supports our values and is consistent with our domestic and international human rights obligations.

The UK's current police training in Sri Lanka is focused on prevention and investigation of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, and promoting gender equality and women's representation in the Sri Lankan police service. Due to Covid-19, many of the training activities have been paused, with the exception of work at the local level to support victims of sexual and gender-based violence and domestic violence.

■ Tigray: Armed Conflict

Patrick Grady:

[306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Government is taking to monitor and support the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

Eritrea's role in the conflict in Tigray, including the continued presence of its armed forces, is deeply concerning. There are numerous shocking reports of atrocities committed by Eritrean forces in Tigray, and their continued presence is fueling insecurity. However, seven weeks on from Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy's

commitment that Eritrean troops would withdraw from Tigray we are yet to see any evidence that this is happening - in fact, we have received reports of Eritrean troops wearing Ethiopian National Defence Force uniforms. These forces must leave Ethiopia immediately. I made this clear to the Eritrean Ambassador on 16 March, and we set this out in our joint statement with the G7 on 2 April and a G7 Communiqué on 5 May. Our Ambassador in Addis Ababa met with the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defence Force in the week of 26 April to press this point. We are closely monitoring the situation and are clear that their withdrawal must be swift, unconditional and verifiable. We continue to press hard for this commitment to be delivered.

■ UN Commission on the Status of Women: Iran

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how the UK voted in the United Nations Economic and Social Council ballot on Iran's election to the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

James Cleverly:

We have serious concerns about Iran's human rights record, including with respect to women's rights. We regularly raise human rights directly with the Iranians at all levels as well as in multilateral fora, including at the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly. We continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

The UK has a long-standing policy of not revealing how we have voted in international elections.

■ UN Population Fund

Helen Hayes: [\[1140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK's withdrawal of funding to the United Nations Population Fund on (a) maternal and infant mortality rates and (b) reproductive health worldwide.

Helen Hayes: [\[1141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support family planning charities and projects throughout the world after the UK withdrawal of funding to the UN Population Fund.

Wendy Morton:

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to make tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the amount we spend on foreign aid.

The UK's aid budget has been allocated in accordance with our key strategic priorities and after a cross-government review of how we spend ODA. The Foreign

Secretary has agreed he will focus our investment and expertise where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum impact. We are now working with partners to help them assess and manage the impact of UK funding reductions on individual programmes and we will share further details on this in due course. In the meantime, let me reassure you that the UK remains a proud partner to UNFPA and a global champion of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We will maintain a broad range of sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes including in family planning. We will do this through programmes such as the Global Financing Facility, Reproductive Health Supplies and our support to FP2030.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Munira Wilson:

[1421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of prioritising pregnant women for covid-19 vaccinations.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 16 April the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation updated their advice to indicate that pregnant women should be offered routine vaccination at the same time as non-pregnant women. The Government has accepted this advice. Pregnant women will therefore be called for vaccination within their overall age cohort or clinical risk factor group, as the risk of serious outcomes is still most strongly linked to age.

Mick Whitley:

[450]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who visit their GP in respect of (a) mental ill health and (b) suicidal ideation are referred to third sector organisations that offer bespoke support.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Following a recent review into the Quality and Outcomes Framework indicators by NHS England and NHS Improvement and the general practitioner (GP) committee of the British Medical Association, GPs have been incentivised to provide patients with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses with a comprehensive care plan. Guidance for 2021/22 sets out a care programme approach whereby the patient must have a documented care plan which has been discussed with their community key worker. A care plan can include information on how socially supported the individual is, including their involvement with voluntary sector organisations, and co-ordination arrangements with secondary care and/or mental health services.

■ Abortion: Drugs

Jim Shannon: [730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is undertaking research on abortion pill reversal procedures.

Helen Whately:

The Department is not undertaking any research on abortion pill reversal procedures.

■ Antibiotics: Side Effects

Mrs Pauline Latham: [684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase awareness of fluoroquinolone toxicity among healthcare professionals.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued reminders for healthcare professionals that fluoroquinolones should not be used in conditions that are not serious or improve on their own and that they should only be used for acute episodes of chronic bronchitis and uncomplicated cystitis if other antibiotics cannot be used.

This also includes stronger warnings about the potential side effects of fluoroquinolones in the product information for healthcare professionals and for patients and mandating pharmaceutical companies to issue letters to healthcare professionals on the new restrictions and stronger warnings about these serious risks, including signs and symptoms which can appear.

The MHRA is working with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the British National Formulary to promote appropriate use of fluoroquinolones and ensure that the restrictions are aligned with United Kingdom national guidance on the antibiotic treatment of infections.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Anne Marie Morris: [1314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans mandate care home covid-19 guidance to ensure that care homes do not prohibit visitors without good cause as restrictions are lifted.

Helen Whately:

We have issued new guidance on care home visiting and will keep arrangements under review.

If a resident or their family believe a care home is not following visiting guidance appropriately then concerns should be raised with the home in the first instance. If this does not resolve the situation, they can also raise concerns with the Care Quality Commission who will investigate.

Mr Kevan Jones: [79]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to provide an update on allowing care home residents to make visits outside as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Helen Whately:

We have updated our guidance on care home visiting which came into effect on 17 May, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arrangements-for-visiting-out-of-the-care-home/visits-out-of-care-homes>

All care home residents should be supported to leave the home to spend time outdoors or to take part in other activity that is important to their health and wellbeing, subject to individual risk assessments. Our guidance advises care homes that visits out for medical appointments or to take part in other activities necessary to maintain an individual's health and wellbeing do not need to be followed by a period of isolation.

■ Complementary Medicine

Peter Dowd: [1088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of complementary therapists in (a) responding to health needs and (b) supporting the NHS during the covid-19 outbreak.

Peter Dowd: [1089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to help to improve (a) cost, (b) time and (c) staffing efficiencies in the NHS by using complementary therapists.

Peter Dowd: [1090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase the funding allocated to complementary therapy services.

Peter Dowd: [1091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that complementary therapy services are accessible to NHS patients.

Peter Dowd: [1092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of complementary therapy services in supporting patients in hospitals and hospices.

Peter Dowd: [1093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of how complementary therapies can help to tackle (a) increased

levels of stress, (b) anxiety, (c) mental health issues and (d) symptoms associated with long covid.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no assessment.

It is the responsibility of local National Health Service organisations to make decisions on the commissioning and funding of any NHS healthcare treatments, taking account of safety, clinical and cost effectiveness and the availability of suitability qualified and regulated practitioners.

■ **Coronavirus: Death**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[1163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to ONS statistics published on 6 May 2021, for what reason risk of death involving covid-19 increased for Sikhs and Muslims compared to Christians between the first and second wave of covid-19; and what steps he plans to take in response to that data.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: The exact reasons for these findings are still unknown.

The Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) published her second quarterly report on 26 February 2021, which set out work conducted since the first quarterly report, including reviewing the effectiveness of current actions being undertaken by the Government to lessen disparities in infection and death rates of COVID-19. The report reflects that considerable efforts are underway to address these disparities, including through the Community Champions scheme led by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which has provided £23.75 million in funding to local authorities.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

John McDonnell:

[\[595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle failures by companies that are required to deliver covid-19 tests under the Government's quarantine procedures to deliver those tests.

John McDonnell:

[\[596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that companies listed on the Government's website as a provider of covid-19 tests under the Government's quarantine procedures are not acting in a fraudulent manner.

Jo Churchill:

Those providers listed on GOV.UK have declared and evidenced compliance with the relevant minimum standards for their commercial provision of testing, including participating in the three-staged United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) process if they are providing sample collection and/or test analysis services. UKAS

also take appropriate action where organisations fraudulently state they are UKAS accredited.

The Department is working closely with providers to ensure tests and results are delivered on time. Providers' performance is continually monitored and the Department takes rapid action should providers deliver inadequate services. This includes a five-day warning to demonstrate they have rectified their service or they will be removed from GOV.UK.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Justin Madders:

[304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of second covid-19 vaccinations have happened within 12 weeks of the first to date.

Nadhim Zahawi:

NHS England and NHS Improvement do not currently hold centrally validated data on what proportion of second COVID-19 vaccinations have happened within 12 weeks of the first to date.

As of 19 May 2021, 20,870,453 people have received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The total number of second doses of a COVID-19 vaccine administered is available at the following link:

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

On 14 May 2021, the Government accepted new advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and announced that appointments for a second dose of a vaccine would be brought forward from 12 to eight weeks for the remaining people in the top nine priority groups who have yet to receive their second dose. This is to ensure the strongest possible protection from the virus at an earlier opportunity in response to the B.1.617.2 variant of concern, first identified in India.

■ **Dental Services: York**

Rachael Maskell:

[1122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of NHS dentists in York.

Rachael Maskell:

[1123]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS dentists are in (a) York, (b) other areas in Yorkshire, and (c) England.

Jo Churchill:

The number of dentists providing NHS services for the Humber, Coast and Vale Sustainability and Transformation Partnership area is 1,443. The number of National Health Service dentists in the Yorkshire and the Humber region is 4,588. Data on the number of providers in York and other areas in Yorkshire is not available in the format requested. In 2019-20 there were 24,684 NHS dentists in England.

■ Fertility: Health Services

Sir Greg Knight:

[999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will undertake a review of access to fertility in the context of treatment varying from area to area under different policies of Clinical Commissioning Groups; if he will take steps to terminate such policy that varies according to a postcode, to ensure fairness and consistency; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are expected to commission fertility services in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines, to ensure equitable access across England. We are aware that some individual CCGs set additional non-clinical criteria. The Department has undertaken an internal review and is currently considering options to address these variations.

■ General Practitioners

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[30]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that GPs offer patients face-to-face appointments.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: General practice is open and has been throughout the pandemic. Practices must ensure they offer face to face appointments and respect patient preferences for face to face care where clinically appropriate in line with the NHS England and NHS Improvement's letter to general practice on 13 May 2021. The letter set out planned updates to the Standard Operating Procedure to support the restoration of services ahead of Government rules on social distancing changing on 17 May. NHS England and NHS Improvement also advised practices to ensure that their receptions are clearly open to the public and that they review communications so that patients understand how to access general practitioner services.

■ Health Services: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield:

[1299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to issue guidance to NHS trusts on ensuring that care is not withheld from EU citizens and non-EU family members who are eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme but have not made an application (a) before and (b) after the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Edward Argar:

The Department has issued detailed guidance to National Health Service trusts, making it clear that EU citizens will need to have lawful status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to meet the ordinarily residence test from 1 July 2021. From this date, the Home Office will accept late applications to the EUSS where they

accept the person has reasonable grounds. The Department has provided guidance to NHS trusts on the chargeable status of patients who have made a late application. Primary medical care is free of charge to all overseas visitors.

■ Incontinence

Jim Shannon: [\[729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people with urinary incontinence by (a) age and (b) gender.

Helen Whately:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Medical Records: Data Protection

Chi Onwurah: [\[707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement on General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GPDPR) service from NHS Digital, what the definition is of research purposes in respect of patient data; and whether that data will be shared with private sector research organisations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: All data requests to NHS Digital will be assessed through the Data Access Request Service to ensure there is a legal basis for us to share data.

The collected General Practice Data for Planning and Research data will be made available for research and planning according to the same criteria as all other reference sets held at NHS Digital.

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

Caroline Nokes: [\[685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) groups and (b) sub groups have been set up on the matter of (i) sodium valproate, (ii) medications in pregnancy. (iii) Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety (IMMDS) Review and (iv) the recommendations of that Review since the (A) valproate toolkit was published in 2015 and (B) IMMDS Review reported in July 2020.

Caroline Nokes: [\[686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review Patient reference group was set up to discuss the (a) three interventions of Valproate, Mesh and Primodos involved in that review and (b) future of patients and their welfare within the health system.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department has not established any groups or sub-groups on sodium valproate or medications in pregnancy.

The Department has established a Patient Reference Group (PRG) in 2020 consisting of patients and patients' representatives, including those involved in the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety (IMMDS) Review and those with a wider interest in patient safety. The purpose of the PRG is to provide challenge, advice and scrutiny to the work to develop the Government's response to the recommendations set out in the IMMDS Review. The scope of the PRG does not extend beyond the recommendations in the Review.

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has established groups on sodium valproate and medications in pregnancy. The Sodium Valproate Expert Working Group of the Commission on Human Medicines was convened in February 2014 to advise the Commission on Human Medicines on the risks of valproate in pregnancy and on measures to minimise risk. The MHRA convened the Valproate Stakeholder Network in January 2016 to support communications around the valproate toolkit to raise awareness among women of the risks. It is now focused on consistent UK-wide implementation of the valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme and monitoring compliance.

In July 2019 the Commission on Human Medicines established a new Expert Working Group on Optimising Data on Medicines used in Pregnancy. The Expert Group was to advise on better ways to collect and monitor data on the safety of medicines during pregnancy. The report and recommendations of the Expert Group were published in January 2021.

■ Menopause

Robert Halfon: [\[1043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of the difficulties that women experience as a result of menopause.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From September 2020, relationships, sex education and health education became compulsory in all state funded schools. As part of this pupils are taught about menstrual health and the menopause. On 8 March, the Government launched a 14-week call for evidence as part of the Women's Health Strategy for England. The online survey within the call for evidence seeks information on the menopause. By understanding women's experiences, we can ensure key parts of the health service are meeting women's needs.

■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists

Robert Halfon: [\[680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for mental health services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Long Term Plan aims to invest at least a further £2.3 billion a year into mental health services by 2023/24. This will allow an additional 345,000 children and young people and 380,000 adults a year accessing National Health Service-funded mental health support 2023/24. We are also trialling two four-week waiting time pilots for children and young people and adults.

In March we published the COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan, with an additional £500 million to address waiting times for mental health services.

■ NHS: Agency Workers**Justin Madders:**[\[294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost to the NHS was of using (a) agency staff and (b) bank staff for 2020-21 in (i) Quarter 4 and (ii) total.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: The data is not currently held in the format requested. We expect to publish the data in the summer.

■ NHS: Drugs**Julian Sturdy:**[\[1050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the annual cost to the NHS of mandating the disposal of all unused returned drugs; and what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of the NHS re-prescribing unused returned drugs instead.

Julian Sturdy:[\[1051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of donating unused returned prescribed drugs to developing countries as part of UK aid projects.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS had since taken a range of further measures to further optimise the use of medicines and reduce wastage.

Medicines cannot normally be reused as the quality of returned medicines cannot be assessed on physical inspection alone. The World Health Organization's guidelines state that if the quality of an item is unacceptable in the donor country, it is also unacceptable as a donation. Moreover, there are patent issues involved in donating medicines to other countries.

■ NHS: Early Retirement**David Linden:** [\[837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of (a) pension taxation and (b) the freezing of the lifetime allowance on early retirement rates of senior NHS workers.

David Linden: [\[838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with officials in HM Treasury on the effect of pension taxation on early retirement rates of senior NHS workers.

Helen Whately:

The decision to claim payment of pension is an individual one. The NHS Pension Scheme does not require members to give a reason at the point of claim. It is therefore difficult to determine the specific factors that contribute to early retirements.

The Department continues to have a regular dialogue with HM Treasury on a range of matters relating to the NHS Pension Scheme.

■ Pregnancy: Coronavirus**Munira Wilson:** [\[1201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that pregnant women are offered the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 16 April 2021, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has advised that it is preferable for pregnant women in the United Kingdom to be offered the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccines where available, as these vaccines currently have the most safety data for use in pregnant women. Since 13 May, pregnant women have been able to book their vaccine appointment through the National Booking Service and will be directed to centres offering Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna.

■ Social Services: Reform**Julian Sturdy:** [\[1310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's timetable is for publishing proposals for social care reform.

Helen Whately:

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

Sarah Owen: [\[878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals on reform of the social care system.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: The legislative measures in the Health and Care Bill White Paper are a critical first step in wider reform in the adult social care sector. However, our commitment to the reform of social care extends beyond this legislation and we will bring forward further proposals in 2021.

■ **Transplant Surgery****Dan Jarvis:**[\[1070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been suspended from the NHS Blood and Transplant active transplant list for (a) less than one month, (b) one to three months, (c) four to six months, (d) seven to 12 months and (e) more than 12 months.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: Patients can be suspended from the organ donation transplant waiting list for varying reasons, including a deteriorating condition, safety in relation to COVID-19 or transfer to a different transplant centre due to relocating or capacity issues as a result of the pandemic.

As of 13 May 2021, there were 4,264 patients on the suspended waiting list.

Numbers by length of time patients were suspended is shown in the following table:

LESS THAN ONE MONTH	ONE TO THREE MONTHS	FOUR TO SIX MONTHS	SEVEN TO 12 MONTHS	MORE THAN 12 MONTHS
347	312	725	840	2,040

Source: NHS Blood and Transplant

Dan Jarvis:[\[740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many organ transplant operations have been conducted in each month since May 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: A table showing the number of organ transplant operations conducted in each month since May 2020 is attached.

Attachments:

1. Table [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE Table for PQ740 - Dan Jarvis - Organ Donation - final.docx]

■ **Travel: Coronavirus****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[1143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the affordability of the cost of PCR tests for air passengers; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that cost on air passengers in financial difficulty.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: We are committed to working with the travel industry and private testing providers to reduce the cost of travel testing, for the British public including for those travelling for family reasons as well as ensuring travel is as safe as possible. NHS Test and Trace tests are available at the market mid-point.

HOME OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Dr Matthew Offord:****[220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate his Department has made of the social and economic cost of drugs supply in England and Wales.

Kit Malthouse:

The Dame Carol Black Review of Drugs Part 1 contains an estimate of the total cost of harms related to illicit drug use in England of £19.3 billion in the financial year 2017/18. This was published in February 2020: [Review of drugs: phase one report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

This estimate includes costs associated with the demand side of the drug market including healthcare and treatment costs, as well as costs associated with acquisitive crime. Therefore, these cost estimates capture wider costs than those purely relating to drugs supply.

A corresponding estimate is not currently available for Wales.

Stuart C McDonald:**[281]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a policy equality statement in respect of the inadmissibility rules published in December 2020.

Chris Philp:

An equality impact assessment covering the inadmissibility rules changes will be published in the near future.

Stuart C McDonald:**[282]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the absence of bilateral agreements with third countries, how many case-by-case agreements for the return of asylum-seekers have been reached since 1 January 2021.

Stuart C McDonald:**[285]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many transfers have been carried out under the inadmissibility rules for asylum claims published in December 2020, from 1 January 2021 to 5 May 2021.

Chris Philp:

Figures on the number of asylum application decisions made in the first quarter of 2021 are due to be published on 27 May 2021. We are working to bring

inadmissibility data in line with current reporting and hope to publish that information in the same timeframe.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

Stuart C McDonald: [286]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many members of staff work in the Third Country Unit.

Chris Philp:

Work from the former Third Country Unit was separated in April 2019 with returns related activity moving to the National Returns Command.

Initial decision making on the latest inadmissibility provisions also sits within the National Returns Command. The National Returns Command currently has 584 staff in post.

Martyn Day: [364]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's decision to return to physical right to work checks from 17 May 2021, what assessment her Department has made of the potential public safety implications of the decision; and if she will publish the evidential basis for that decision.

Chris Philp:

On 20 April, we announced that from 17 May, employers would be required to revert back to face to face and physical document checks as set out in legislation and guidance. However, we published an update to this on 12 May, announcing the decision to push back the date for physical document checks to resume from 21 June.

After consulting extensively, we understand that many employers will not be in a position to return fully to the office until 21 June in line with the UK Government's roadmap to ease lockdown restrictions in England and those of the devolved administrations.

The COVID-19 adjusted checking process was a temporary measure and we made clear to employers that we would end it in line with the lifting of social distancing measures.

Martyn Day: [365]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish feedback from its recent consultation with stakeholders on digital right to work checks.

Martyn Day: [366]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to host a further consultation with stakeholders on the future use of digital right to work checks; and whether her Department has plans to seek representations from employers based in the UK on the effect of those checks on their operations.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office's online right to work checking service has been in operation for over two years. It enables employers to undertake free digital checks on prospective migrant employees with a biometric residence permit or card, status under the EU Settlement Scheme or the new Points-Based System. The online service relies on real-time information from the Home Office about an individual's status and checks can be undertaken remotely.

The online right to work checking service is part of our wider ambition to develop a border and immigration system which is "digital by default", including providing evidence of immigration status. We are increasingly replacing physical and paper-based products and services with accessible, easy to use online and digital services.

In March 2020, we introduced the COVID-19 temporary adjusted right to work and rent measures, which allow for remote checking for those individuals, such as British citizens, who cannot use the online right to work checking service. These measures were intended to be in place for a limited period, as they do not provide fully secure digital verification. The adjusted process allows document checks to be undertaken remotely, via video call, rather than face-to-face and for scanned copies of documents to be provided.

We recognise the benefits this process has brought to employers and are mindful of the potential shift towards increased hybrid and remote working as the future model of many businesses. We consulted with our employer stakeholder groups on the use of the adjusted process and our review found the ability to undertake remote checks on all employees, not just migrant workers, has been beneficial.

Consequently, we are now evaluating the potential for introducing a permanent digital option using specialist technology, including Identity Document Validation technology (IDVT) for those who cannot use the online checking service. This work will include consultation with representatives from employer groups based in the UK about the value of such technology in carrying out right to work checks, whilst maintaining the security and integrity of our system in the long-term.

Kim Johnson:[\[513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a landlord conducting right-to-rent checks after 30 June 2021 will be obliged to refuse to rent a property to an EU citizen in the event that they are unable to demonstrate proof of their status and have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

From 1 July right to rent checks will change and EEA citizens will be required to demonstrate eligibility through evidence of their immigration status, rather than their nationality, now free movement has ended.

We will be updating our guidance and communicating with landlords in the coming weeks to set out the support available and ensure they are clear on the steps they should take at the end of the grace period.

Where an EEA citizen, who was resident here before the end of the transition period, has reasonable grounds for missing the EUSS application deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

■ Community Policing

Stuart Anderson: [\[1200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve police presence and trust in local communities.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to giving police the resources they need to tackle the scourge of crime, including supporting police forces to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers by March 2023. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the police have now recruited an extra 8,771 officers, 44% of the 20,000-officer target, and have therefore exceeded the first target of 6,000 additional officers by March 2021. The police workforce is now more representative of the communities it serves than ever before, with the latest data showing the highest proportion of black, Asian, and minority ethnic and female officers since records began.

In 2021-2022, we are providing £425m to spend on the recruitment of 6,000 additional officers by 2022. Of this, PCCs will receive £415m for territorial policing and Regional Organised Crime Units.

The police's ability to fulfil their duties is dependent on their ability to secure and maintain public trust and support for their actions, as part of the model of policing by consent.

That is why the Government have put in place measures to ensure that policing is subject to appropriate levels of transparency and accountability. This includes regular inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), publication of data on the use of police powers and strengthening the police complaints and discipline systems.

■ Detainees: EU Nationals

Helen Hayes: [\[1340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens have been detained in advance of deportation from the UK in each month since the signing of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement.

Helen Hayes: [\[1341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens have been deported from the UK in each month since the signing of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK and the number of people entering detention in each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly release](#)'.

The latest data on enforced returns (of which 'deportations' is a subset) are published in the [returns summary tables](#). The data include the number of returns that occurred from detention. More detailed breakdowns, including nationality breakdowns, can be found in Ret_D01 of the [Returns detailed dataset](#).

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns, which are enforced either following a criminal conviction, or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. The published statistics refer to enforced returns which include deportations, as well as cases where a person has breached UK immigration laws and those removed under other administrative and illegal entry powers that have declined to leave voluntarily. Figures on deportations, which are a subset of enforced returns, are not separately available.

The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

Data on the number of people entering and leaving detention are published in the [Detention summary tables](#). Data on reason for leaving detention (including those 'Returned from the UK') are published in table Det_04a of the '[Detention summary tables](#)'. Further breakdowns, including nationality breakdowns, can be found in the [Immigration detention detailed datasets](#).

The latest data for returns relate to the year ending September 2020. The latest data on detention relate to the year ending December 2020. The next quarterly update will be published on 27 May 2021.

Helen Hayes:**[1342]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether EU citizens detained and held in immigration removal centres are able to secure consular assistance from their home country whilst in the UK.

Helen Hayes:**[1343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether EU citizens detained and held in immigration removal centres are able to access legal advice; and how many

EU citizens have been deported before speaking to a lawyer since the signing of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement.

Chris Philp:

The rights of all detained individuals are protected by the Detention Centre Rules 2001 (DCR), published Operating Standards for immigration removal centres (IRCs) and individuals under escort and Detention Services Orders (DSO).

All individuals who are detained are made aware of their right to legal representation, and how they can obtain such representation, within 24 hours of their arrival at an immigration removal centre (IRC). The Legal Aid Agency operates legal advice surgeries across the detention estate in England, with detainees receiving up to 30 minutes of advice without reference to financial eligibility or merits of their case. If they require substantive advice on a matter which is in scope of legal aid, then full legal advice can be provided. Following a change of operations in line with Government advice on social distancing, the LAA Detained Duty Advice scheme is currently operating by phone. Detained individuals who wish to access this service are asked to advise centre staff, who will notify the duty solicitor under the scheme. The duty solicitor will contact the individual directly.

All individuals in immigration removal centres are provided with a mobile phone and have access to landline telephones, fax machines, email and video calling facilities which can be used to contact legal advisers. In exceptional circumstances, and for individuals facing imminent removal from the UK face to face legal and social visits can occur where other means of contact are not feasible.

The UK also has bilateral consular conventions with a number of countries which imposes an obligation on detaining authorities to notify the person's Embassy of their detention, even if the individual has not requested this, if they are likely to be detained for more than 24 hours. The only exception to this is where the individual has made an asylum claim or if an asylum claim might be forthcoming.

■ **Discrimination**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[98\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many non-crime hate incidences have been recorded by police since 2014.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[99\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an estimate of the number of people that are unaware that they have been recorded by the police for a non-crime hate incident.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes information on hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information on non-crime hate incidents is not centrally collected.

■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide**Alex Davies-Jones:** **[1410]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174856 on Domestic Abuse: Homicide; when the Government plans to publish its review on the collation of data from Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office has undertaken to create a central repository for all Domestic Homicide Reviews.

We are currently reviewing options for creating the repository and will provide an update when a solution is in place.

■ Fraud: Internet**Charlotte Nichols:** **[1215]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on online fraud from those countries aimed at British citizens.

Kit Malthouse:

We are committed to ensuring that there is no safe space for fraudsters to operate and the Home Secretary regularly engages with her international counterparts to build collaboration against this and other crime types. International collaboration on fraud includes the work of the City of London Police to combat call centre fraud from overseas jurisdictions and by the Information Commissioner's Office to promote enforcement against international spam emails.

■ Home Office: Correspondence**Catherine West:** **[385]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of enquiries from hon. Members to her Department received a response within her Department's 20 working day time timescale from January to April 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of MPs written correspondence within 20 working days. Performance has been impacted by a very significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, alongside the need for Ministers and officials to instigate a remote process for drafting and signing correspondence during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

The latest published data on UKVI performance against the service standard, which includes data up to and including the end of quarter 4 - 2020/21, is held at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-february-2021>

■ Housing: Disability**Shabana Mahmood:** [184]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure people with disabilities, who live in buildings with fire safety faults, are guaranteed a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan by building managing agents.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office will be consulting on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in high-rise residential settings shortly. This consultation follows the recent Fire Safety Consultation (FSC) which sought views on the recommendations in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report, details of this consultation can be found [here](#).

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Paul Blomfield:** [1298]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that no EU citizen who has lived in the UK for more than the five years required for Settled Status and is unable to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by the 30 June 2021 deadline because they were not aware of that scheme and deadline or did not realise they were required to apply will lose their status and rights.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has received more than 5.4 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme to 30 April 2021. Our focus remains on encouraging those EU citizens and their family members eligible for the scheme who have yet to apply to do so before the 30 June 2021 deadline for those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period.

We recently launched another marketing campaign for this purpose, bringing to £7.9 million our investment in such activity. The campaign highlights the significant support in applying to the scheme available to those who need it, including from the network of now 72 organisations across the UK, grant funded by the Home Office with £22 million to help vulnerable people apply.

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, we have made clear where a person eligible for status under the scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply. The non-exhaustive guidance on reasonable grounds for submitting a late application we published on 1 April 2021 includes where there are compelling practical or compassionate reasons why a person may have been unaware of the requirement to apply to the scheme by the deadline or may have failed to do so.

Alan Brown: [338]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many live EU settled status applications from Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency are waiting to be resolved.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme in the '[EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)'. It is published on the basis of local authority, rather than constituency areas.

Data on the number of applications and concluded applications by UK local authority are published in Tables EUSS_LA_01 and EUSS_LA_03 of the quarterly EUSS statistics local authority tables, which can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2020

Stuart C McDonald: [772]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an employer conducting right-to-work checks after 30 June 2021 will be obliged to terminate the employment of an EU citizen where that EU citizen is unable to demonstrate proof of their status or proof that they have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Stuart C McDonald: [773]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an EU citizen care worker who fails to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 will be prosecuted if they continue to work without status.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: Where an EEA citizen has reasonable grounds for missing the EUSS application deadline, they will be given an opportunity to make a late application.

Any EEA citizen encountered by Immigration Enforcement after 30 June 2021, who may be eligible to apply to the EUSS, will be issued with a notice which provides a further 28 days for the individual to submit their application. Further information will be provided to employers shortly about what they should do if they have an employee who finds themselves in this situation.

Each individual case will be considered on its own merits.

■ Immigration: Hong Kong**Gareth Thomas:** [51]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appointments Sopra Steria UKVCAS provides each day for holders of British National Overseas (Hong Kong) status to complete their biometric enrolment at service and support centres; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The majority of customers applying for the Hong Kong BN(O) visa route are able to complete their applications without attending a biometric enrolment appointment, as they are able to prove their identity through the "UK Immigration: ID Check" smartphone app.

Where a customer applying for the Hong Kong BN(O) visa route is required to attend an appointment, they attend a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) centre which are run by Sopra Steria Ltd (SSL) on behalf of UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI).

UKVCAS appointments are released to all relevant customers simultaneously, irrespective of the immigration route under which they have applied, on a daily basis, 28 days in advance. The number of appointments added into the system is not constant as it depends on a number of factors. In the week commencing 10 May 2021, 17,251 appointments have been offered across the full network of UKVCAS service points.

UKVI works closely with SSL to monitor appointment levels to ensure sufficient appointments are made available overall and including in geographical regions where there appears to be most demand.

The Service and Support Centres (SSCs) are a separate service, run directly by the Home Office, and are designed to provide additional support to more vulnerable customers. Customers are routed to SSCs or UKVCAS depending on their circumstances established through the application process.

■ Immigration: Scotland

Kenny MacAskill: [\[1400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) set out details of and (b) publish protocols between her Department and Police Scotland on policing of the enforcement of immigration issues.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[1401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) set out details of and (b) publish protocols on the enforcement of immigration issues in Scotland.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[1402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions officials in her Department have had with (a) representatives of Police Scotland and (b) the Scottish Government prior to the attempted removal of asylum seekers in Kenmure Street, Glasgow on 13 May 2021.

Chris Philp:

As with our activity throughout the UK, Immigration Enforcement works closely with Police Scotland to ensure that our operations are conducted lawfully and safely – this includes notifying the Police of scheduled visits through operational notifications. The Home Office and Police Scotland have a Memorandum of Understanding for data sharing. Police Scotland and the Home Office share data and intelligence on immigration crime, detecting foreign national offenders in the community, modern slavery and human trafficking amongst many other things.

There are no protocols on the enforcement of immigration issues specific to Scotland. Guidance and procedures for immigration issues throughout the UK are published on WWW.GOV.UK.

This was a routine, lawful, operation: the Police were informed of the visit in advance through an operational notification form and raised no concerns. Routine operations are not normally discussed with any government department prior to activity taking place so no discussions took place with the Scottish Government prior to this visit.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper: [\[1030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. member for West Lancashire of 25 March 2021 on policing of breaches of covid-19 rules, reference ZA56046.

Kit Malthouse:

With sincere apologies for the delay, a ministerial response has now been sent.

■ **Migrants: Children**

Neil Coyle: [\[266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the High Court ruling of 29 April 2021 on the No Recourse to Public Funds policy, what steps she is taking to safeguard children's welfare.

Neil Coyle: [\[267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will review her Department's No Recourse to Public Funds policy in light of the High Court ruling of 29 April 2021.

Chris Philp:

The policy of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) has been upheld by successive governments and maintains that those seeking to establish their family life in the UK must do so on a basis that prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration.

In the case of ST vs SSHD the High Court dismissed five of the six grounds raised by the claimant challenging the lawfulness of the policy. We are currently reflecting on the judgment in relation to our child welfare responsibilities.

People with leave under family and human rights routes can already apply, free of charge, to have the no recourse to public funds condition lifted.

■ **Security Guards: First Aid**

Sir George Howarth: [\[619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to recent changes to the Security Industry Authority license to incorporate first aid training, whether her

department has made an assessment of the effect of those changes on the (a) potential financial implications and (b) demand for jobs within the security industry; and whether she has received representations on the reasons for the those changes.

Kit Malthouse:

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) recently updated training requirements for those applying for a front-line SIA licence. These changes followed the SIA's last five-year review of its training standards and are designed to ensure that people working in the private security sector can continue to keep the public safe. From 1 April 2021 first time applicants for a door supervisor or security guard licence are expected to complete a first aid qualification as part of their licence-linked training. This will be a requirement for people renewing their licences from October 2021.

The Home Office received a detailed explanation of the reasons for these changes and fully considered the SIA's assessment of the impact of these reforms. The SIA conducted robust research within the industry on skills requirements, including consulting with industry experts, to inform the drafting of the new qualification specifications. The SIA also carried out two rounds of public consultation on all of the revised qualification specifications. These resulted in over 6,000 responses to the SIA which were mostly from licence holders.

Applicants will have choices that will affect how much they will pay. They have choices about which training provider to use, and what method of learning to use (for example, the proportion of self-study, remote and in-person learning), which affects the length of time required to complete it.

■ **Visas: Commonwealth**

Andrew Rosindell:

[96]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has had discussions with stakeholders on introducing an electronic visa for citizens of Commonwealth nations to improve the efficiency of the immigration procedure at airports.

Kevin Foster:

As part of our transformation of the border and immigration system, the government will implement a suite of changes to transform the way in which we manage people crossing the UK border.

Our future border systems will provide for a fully digital end-to-end user journey, improving security and making the user journey friendly and digital by default. This will include the introduction of a digital "e-visa", replacing the current paper vignette.

Andrew Rosindell:

[97]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of simplifying visa arrangements for travel from small commonwealth countries.

Kevin Foster:

Visas are an important part of securing the UK's border and are an effective tool for the UK in reducing illegal immigration, tackling organised crime and protecting national security. Decisions on changes are always taken in the round, and reflect a range of factors. These will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns, and prosperity.

There are no current plans to change the visa requirements for visa nationals visiting the UK, however the visa system continues to be kept under regular review.

■ **Visas: Hong Kong****Gareth Thomas:****[50]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of visa applications from holders of British National Overseas (Hong Kong) status have been decided within 12 weeks; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The new Hong Kong BN(O) route was launched on 31 January 2021, with the new digital application launching on 23 February.

A breakdown of the application numbers and outcomes will be published as part of the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release', the next update is due for publication on 27 May 2021 and will be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****John Howell:****[179]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of resolution 2368 on preserving national minorities in Europe passed at the Council of Europe on 19 April 2021; and whether the Government plans to take steps following the passing of that resolution.

Eddie Hughes:

We welcome the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's important work in this area. The UK Government continues to take its responsibilities under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities very seriously and does not underestimate the importance and challenge of preserving national minorities. The UK is committed to creating a fair society in which all people are valued and able to participate fully and realise their own potential. In that respect, we call on all member States who have not done so, to ratify the Framework Convention for National Minorities in a timely manner, as a valuable tool for protecting the rights of minorities across Europe.

Stephen Morgan:

[418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of (a) inconsistencies in External Wall System forms and (b) conflicting fire safety assessments of buildings on (i) leaseholders in England and (ii) residents of the Blue Building in Portsmouth.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government wants to make sure all assessments of external walls are done to a consistent standard, which is why we commissioned the British Standards Institution to produce a code of practice for professionals to follow. Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 9980 will provide specific advice to enable professionals carrying out the assessment of external wall systems in a consistent manner. This code of practice has been published in draft form for public consultation, which closes on 20 May.

Stephen Morgan:

[419]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether discrimination against people claiming housing benefit in the private rented sector is illegal; what recourse is open to people affected by that practice; what steps his Department is taking to prevent that discrimination; and what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent that discrimination.

Eddie Hughes:

Blanket bans against tenants in receipt of benefits have no place in a fair and modern housing market. The Government has worked with the lettings industry to agree an approach to end this practice. Major lettings portals Zoopla and Rightmove agreed to stop the use of 'No DSS' adverts on their websites, and several major lenders agreed to remove restrictions on mortgages which prevented landlords from letting to tenants on benefits. We will continue to encourage landlords to look at all tenants on an individual basis. Current legislation prohibits acts of discrimination against individuals on the basis of a number of protected characteristics. Where a prospective tenant believes that they have been discriminated against, they should seek independent legal advice or contact Citizens' Advice for free, impartial advice.

Additionally, it is a legal requirement for letting and managing agents in England to belong to one of the two Government approved redress schemes. If a prospective tenant feels that a letting agent is acting unfairly or continues to offer a poor service, they can raise a formal complaint.

The Government is committed to delivering a fairer and more effective rental market for all tenants, including our intention to abolish Section 21 'no fault' evictions and introduce a lifetime deposit to ease the burden when moving house. More details will follow in a White Paper published later this year, which will be informed by engagement with stakeholders.

James Wild:

[491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of new homes that were (a) granted planning permission and (b) built in each year since 2015.

Christopher Pincher:

Figures for total housing units granted permission are shown in Table 5 of the latest planning applications statistics release, at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-applications-in-england-october-to-december-2020> Estimates of building control reported new build dwellings completions are shown in Live Tables 253a (quarterly) and 244 (annual), at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building>

These cover new build dwellings only and should be regarded as a leading indicator of overall housing supply.

The Department also publishes an annual release entitled 'Housing supply: net additional dwellings, England', which is the primary and most comprehensive measure of housing supply.

Kim Johnson:

[510]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the deadline for applications to the Building Safety Fund beyond 30 June 2021 to ensure all buildings with flammable cladding are considered.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government extended the full tender deadline for Building Safety Fund from 30 March 2021 to 30 June 2021; and the deadline to start works on site from 30 June 2021 to 30 September 2021. These deadlines were set based on information available at the time about registrants and their readiness to be able to deliver projects. The announcement on 10 February of an additional £3.5 billion of funding provides assurance for residents that all eligible applications to the Building Safety Fund will be able to proceed

Kim Johnson:

[511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to take steps to increase the funding allocations made to eligible applicants under the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

The Building Safety Fund will cover all works directly related to the removal and replacement of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems. The additional £3.5 billion announced on 10 February provides assurance for leaseholders that all eligible applications to the Building Safety Fund will be able to proceed and that Government will fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres and over in England

Kim Johnson:

[512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will provide an update on the application status of the 53 buildings in Liverpool that have submitted applications to the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building Safety Fund. Application progress is communicated to registrants who we expect will ensure that their residents are kept fully informed.

Kim Johnson:

[514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether a local authority assessing the eligibility of an EU citizen for homelessness assistance after 30 June 2021 will be obliged to refuse assistance if that EU citizen is unable to demonstrate any proof of status and has not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

EEA citizens who have missed the 30 June 2021 deadline to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and who do not have a different form of UK immigration status will be considered a person subject to immigration control and will not be eligible for an allocation of social housing or homelessness assistance. They will need to resolve their immigration status. The Home Office's Immigration Rules for the EUSS provide scope for late applications to the EUSS to be accepted where there are reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline, which may include those who are homeless or rough sleeping.

Guidance on eligibility for homelessness assistance can be found in Chapter 7 of the statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance. This is available at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities.

Hilary Benn:

[63]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has had discussions with representatives of mortgage lenders on how leaseholders in flats with dangerous cladding who cannot get an EWS1 certificate may be able to remain on a low mortgage rate rather than have to default to a higher standard variable rate when their current mortgage deal expires.

Christopher Pincher:

The EWS1 is not a government form nor a legal requirement. It was created by industry to help with mortgage valuations for flats in blocks with cladding.

Lenders have confirmed that existing mortgage customers will be given the same access to commercial mortgage rates as new customers, but will not be asked to produce an EWS1 for their flat unless they are asking to borrow more or otherwise change the terms of their mortgage.

■ Affordable Housing: Young People

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[1417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to make housing more affordable for young people.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: We are building the homes our country needs and helping a new generation to own their own home – and making sure young people are not priced out of their area.

We are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes our new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme which will leverage up to £38 billion of private finance and deliver up to 180,000 homes should economic conditions allow. Half of these homes will be for affordable home ownership, supporting aspiring homeowners to take their first step on to the housing ladder. This includes our new, fairer model for Shared Ownership and 1,500 First Homes for first-time buyers and key workers.

First Homes are homes which are sold to first-time buyers with a discount of at least 30 per cent from full market value, making both deposits and mortgage requirements cheaper and opening up the dream of home ownership to even more people. The discount will be funded by developers themselves as part of their contributions through planning obligations, without a direct cost to central Government or local authorities.

Crucially, the discount will be passed on to all future purchasers in perpetuity, so these homes will keep helping first-time buyers onto the property ladder for generations to come.

In future, 25 per cent of all affordable homes delivered by developers as part of their obligatory contributions will be First Homes. This new First Homes Requirement means that there will be a steady and sustained supply of these homes, helping first-time buyers across England.

This is in addition to our Help to Buy: Equity Loans, which have helped over 257,000 first-time buyers into homeownership since its launch in 2013 to 1 December 2020. The new Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme opened on 1 April 2021 and will run to March 2023. It is targeted at first-time buyers only and has regional property price caps based on average first time buyer property prices.

The mortgage guarantee scheme launched on 19 April 2021 and will be available until December 2022, enabling lenders to offer 95% loan-to-value (LTV) mortgages to both first-time buyers and existing homeowners, throughout the whole UK, on homes up to £600,000 in value. 95% mortgages supported through the scheme are open to all adults, including young adults.

For renters, in response to Covid-19 pressures, the Government has put in place an unprecedented support package to help renters and ensure they can continue to

afford their housing costs, including retaining the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Universal Credit uplift until September.

In the long run we need to build more homes to tackle affordability. This is why we are bringing forward an ambitious near-£20 billion investment to underpin the Government's long-term housing strategy. We are also pushing forward with our planning reforms to establish a simpler, faster and more predictable system and ensure that the right homes are built in the right places where they are needed.

We are making good progress towards achieving our supply ambitions of delivering 1 million homes this Parliament and building 300,000 homes a year over the longer term. Last year, around 244,000 homes were delivered – the highest level for over 30 years and the seventh consecutive year that net supply has increased.

■ Buildings: Fire Prevention

Mike Amesbury: [\[1380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many buildings have been allocated funding to pay for the costs of installing an alarm system in buildings with unsafe cladding from the £30 million Waking Watch relief fund.

Mike Amesbury: [\[1382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many buildings in (a) Greater London, (b) Greater Manchester, (c) Birmingham, (d) Leeds, (e) Liverpool, (f) Bristol, (g) Newcastle and (h) Sheffield have (i) applied for funding to pay for the costs of installing an alarm system in buildings with unsafe cladding and (ii) were granted that funding.

Mike Amesbury: [\[1383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many eligible buildings applied for the fund to pay for the costs of installing an alarm system in buildings with unsafe cladding.

Mike Amesbury: [\[1384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding on average has been paid out per building from the £30 million fund to pay for the costs of installing an alarm system in buildings with unsafe cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

The Waking Watch Relief Fund opened for applications for buildings in England, except private sector buildings in London, on 31 January 2021 and closed on 14 March. For private sector buildings in London the Fund opened on 18 March 2021 and closed 30 April. All applications received are currently being processed. We will publish complete data on the Waking Watch Relief Fund, including the number of applications and funding approvals so far, shortly.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the proposed cladding loan scheme, for leaseholders living in buildings with fire safety faults, on disabled or older people's incomes who are supported solely by state benefits or pensions.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential effect of the proposed cladding loan scheme, for leaseholders living in buildings with fire safety faults, on disabled or older people's incomes who are supported solely by state benefits or pensions.

Christopher Pincher:

We are continuing to develop a financing scheme using a range of evidence to ensure that it protects all types of leaseholders and will prioritise affordability and accelerate remediation. We are working on the underpinning details and will announce further information as soon as we are in a position to do so.

■ Disabled Facilities Grants**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grants to include emergency evacuation from buildings at risk of fire safety faults.

Christopher Pincher:

Anyone can already apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant to contribute to the capital cost of adapting their home, including to facilitate access in and out of their building or around the common parts of their building, subject to a needs assessment, eligibility criteria, and a means test. This includes in buildings at risk of fire safety faults.

■ Housing: Business Premises**Steve Reed:** [\[1316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed new permitted development right to enable the change of use from the new Class E to residential on the workload of local authority planning departments.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer of 18 May to Question UIN 1079. As part of our work on planning reform, we will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy, to ensure that local planning authorities are properly resourced to improve the speed and quality of their decisions.

■ Housing: Disability

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what financial support is available to people with disabilities who live in buildings with fire safety faults to install evacuation aids to facilitate safe evacuation in event of a fire.

Christopher Pincher:

Under the Building Safety Programme, the Government has intervened with an unprecedented over £5 billion investment in building safety, to fully fund the remediation of unsafe cladding for leaseholders in all residential buildings 18 metres and over in England. Lower rise buildings, with a lower risk to safety, will also gain new protection from costs of cladding removal with a generous new scheme offered to buildings between 11 and 18 metres in height. We have also launched a £30 million fund to install fire alarms in high-rise buildings, relieving residents of waking watch costs.

The Government-funded Disabled Facilities Grant can contribute to the capital cost of adapting an eligible persons home, including to facilitate access in and out of their building or around the common parts of their building, subject to a needs assessment, eligibility criteria, and a means test. This includes in buildings at risk of fire safety faults.

The Fire Safety Order (FSO) applies to the non-domestic parts of multi occupied residential premises. Responsible Persons (who may be building owners) under the FSO have a duty to take such general fire precautions as are reasonably required to ensure the safety of premises. Such precautions include measures to reduce the risk of fire on the premises, measures relating to means of escape from the premises and ensuring these can be safely and effectively used, and measures to mitigate the effect of fire.

■ Housing: Insulation

Gareth Thomas:

[\[47\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the proposals published by the Leasehold Knowledge Partnership for a single special purpose vehicle to fund remediation works on buildings identified as having fire safety defects; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government values and listens to the views of our stakeholders in all relevant areas, including the Leasehold Knowledge Partnership, and we are continuing to develop a financing scheme using a range of evidence to ensure that it protects leaseholders, prioritising affordability and accelerating remediation. We will announce further details as soon as we are in a position to do so.

Gareth Thomas: [\[48\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what safeguards are in place to guarantee the quality of work by contractors undertaking remediation works on buildings identified as having fire safety defects; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The removal and replacement of unsafe cladding from buildings must be signed off by the relevant building control body to ensure that the works comply with the building regulations requirement for the external walls of the building to adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls and from one building to another, having regard to the height, use and location of the building. Where works are funded by the Government we expect fund applicants to appoint a team of competent professionals to advise them on the assessment of the external wall system and the proposed remediation works, and to confirm the use of non-combustible materials in the recladding works.

■ Local Government Finance

Steve Reed: [\[1317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2021 to Question 185381 on Local Government Finance, if he will confirm the actual spending power of English local government for the financial year 2021-22 based on confirmed council tax rates.

Luke Hall:

The Government uses Core Spending Power when presenting the annual Local Government Finance Settlement as a measure of the resources available to local authorities.

This year, the Government made available a 4.6 per cent cash terms increase in councils' Core Spending Power, rising from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22. We gave local authorities flexibility to raise council tax bills without a referendum to meet spending pressures across their budgets and, in recognition that some local authorities might not wish to take up this flexibility in full in 2021-22, we also gave them the option to defer part or all of the Adult Social Care precept into 2022-23.

■ Planning

Steve Reed: [\[1318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2021 to Question 186174, on Planning, if his Department will publish details of (a) which Ministers have undertaken training and (b) when that training was undertaken.

Christopher Pincher:

All Ministers involved in planning receive training shortly after being appointed to their roles, and before they begin taking planning casework decisions.

■ Property Development

Apsana Begum: [\[896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations his Department has received on residential developments that have had A1 or A2 EWS ratings re-assessed as B2; and what steps he is taking to ensure the standardisation of results through clarifying who is entitled to carry out those tests.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department is aware of a small number of cases regarding differing EWS1 valuation assessments. Differing assessments may be as a result of further information about a building being obtained. It is for the building owner to explain any changes in valuation assessment. RICS have published a list of professionals suitable to sign an EWS1 form.

An EWS1 form is not a safety certificate or safety 'test'. An EWS1 form is not a replacement for a fire risk assessment, carried out by a competent professional.

To support professionals undertaking work to complete the external wall aspect of fire risk assessments, the Government has commissioned the British Standards Institution to produce a Publicly Available Specification (PAS). Known as PAS 9980, this is a code of practice is designed to ensure that if followed, assessments of external wall systems are consistent.

The code of practice has been published in draft form for public consultation, which closes on 20 May.

The Department is funding nearly £700k to train additional assessors. RICS, the body delivering the training, is ensuring alignment with the emergent code of practice.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Steve Reed: [\[1315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what role his Department will have in the preparation of the Levelling Up White Paper.

Luke Hall:

Levelling up all areas of the country remains at the centre of government's agenda. Later this year we will publish a Levelling Up White Paper setting out how bold new policy interventions will improve livelihoods across the country as we recover from the pandemic.

■ Religious Buildings: Music

Michael Fabricant: [\[608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he publish a timescale for allowing choral singing and performance to resume in English cathedrals and churches as covid-19 restrictions are eased; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

The roadmap to reopening published on 22 February set out the steps by which restrictions on activities will be lifted and the considerations that will determine the rate of progress. Singing, playing some musical instruments, shouting and physical activity increases the risk of transmission through small droplets and aerosols and the cumulative effect of aerosol transmission means the more people involved, the higher the risk of transmission. From 17 May, when Step 3 of the roadmap is taken, indoors in a Place of Worship a group of up to 6 amateur singers can perform, or rehearse for performance. There is no limit on the number of professional singers but they should follow guidance for the performing arts. Outdoors, the congregation may join in with singing in multiple groups of up to 30. Congregation members should continue to follow social distancing rules. A decision on whether to allow larger performances and communal singing in a place of worship will be taken as we approach Step 4 of the roadmap, no earlier than 21 June.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership****Emily Thornberry:**[\[1282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans the Government has to include provisions in the Professional Qualifications Bill, announced in the Queen's Speech 2021, to provide for the implementation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Greg Hands:

The Government will bring forward legislation to implement future Free Trade Agreements where existing powers do not exist on the statute book.

The Government will update Parliament in due course on its proposed accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) by publishing its negotiation bundle, including a response to the public consultation, economic scoping assessment and outline approach, in advance of accession negotiations beginning.

■ Trade Agreements: Australasia**Emily Thornberry:**[\[149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how far in advance of the G7 summit in June 2021 she plans to consult the members of her Trade Advisory Group on Agri-Food on the final draft text of relevant chapters of her proposed trade agreement with Australia.

Emily Thornberry: [151]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she next plans to consult the members of her Trade Advisory Group on Agri-Food on the final draft text of relevant chapters of her proposed trade agreement with New Zealand.

Emily Thornberry: [154]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to consult the members of her Trade Advisory Groups on (a) Automotive, aerospace and marine, (b) Manufactured and consumer goods, (c) Chemicals and (d) Life sciences on the final draft text of relevant chapters of her proposed trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand.

Emily Thornberry: [155]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to consult the members of her Trade Advisory Groups on (a) Telecoms and technology, (b) Creative industries, (c) Investment, (d) Transport services, (e) Professional advisory services and (f) Financial services on the final draft text of relevant chapters of her proposed trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Trade Advisory Groups will be given an update at their next meetings, or at a special joint meeting.

Emily Thornberry: [157]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to consult the members of her Trade Union Advisory Group on the text of relevant chapters of her draft trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Trade Union Advisory Group will be given an update at its next meeting.

Trade Union Advisory Group**Emily Thornberry:** [156]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, who the current members of her Trade Union Advisory Group are; and on what dates Ministers from her Department have had meetings with members of that group since October 2020.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The membership of the Trade Union Advisory Group is published online at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and the Group met on 16th October 2020, 22nd February 2021, and 26th April 2021.

UK Export Finance: Finance**Gareth Thomas:** [45]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much funding her Department allocated to UK Export Finance in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas:**[46]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of UK Export Finance; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is a separate ministerial government department and is not funded by the Department for International Trade. It operates at no net cost to the taxpayer. It has received the following funding for the last five years, as voted for by Parliament:

BUDGET													
TYPE		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
Main	Supp'	Main	Supp'	Main	Supp'	Main	Supp'	Main	Supp'	Main	Supp'	Main	Supp'
£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Resource (DEL)	40.0	40.0	40.7	40.7	43.1	43.1	44.8	44.4	57.3	56.8	75.1		
Gross													
Resource AME	164.0	120.0	85.0	148.0	102.4	133.4	124.8	124.8	376.5	753.4	748.4		
Capital AME	1936.0	936.0	1289.0	525.0	671.4	725.4	936.9	836.8	2787.0	1487.0	1881.1		1

Further information on UKEF's funding is available in its Annual Report and Accounts, which can be accessed online at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-export-finance-annual-reports-and-accounts

UKEF charges a premium for its support (see table for annual amounts ¹) and its budget is fully funded through the income earned. In the past 4 years (2016-17 to 2019-20 ²) UKEF has transferred £541.1m ¹ into the consolidated fund and has generated, after department costs, an operating profit of £499.0m ¹.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Gross premium earned £000 ⁽¹⁾	120,061	129,930	381,189	207,169	Not yet published

¹Data source - UKEF Annual Report and Accounts.

²The Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21 will be published in due course.

JUSTICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Dr Matthew Offord:

[218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions there have been for selling illegal and counterfeit goods in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions for offences relating to the selling of illegal and counterfeit goods, up to December 2019, available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool, here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938554/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx

Selling illegal and counterfeit goods could relate to a number of offence categories, the request has been interpreted as relating to the following offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994, the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981:

06021	MAKE (OR MAKE A COPY OF WITH INTENT) A FALSE PRESCRIPTION FOR A SCHEDULED DRUG
06022	Use or use a copy of a false prescription for a scheduled drug with intent
06121	Forgery or copying false instrument
06122	Using a false instrument or a copy of a false instrument
06123	Possessing false instrument or materials to make false instrument
06124	Making counterfeit coin or note
06125	Passing etc counterfeit coin or note as genuine
06126	Possessing counterfeit coin or note
06127	Possessing materials or dyes to make counterfeit coin or note
06128	Reproducing British currency note or making imitation British coins
08408	Unauthorised use of trade mark etc. in relation to goods

06021	MAKE (OR MAKE A COPY OF WITH INTENT) A FALSE PRESCRIPTION FOR A SCHEDULED DRUG
08409	Making for sale or hire, importing, possessing or distributing articles which circumvent technological measures for copyright (e.g. unauthorised decoders) (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988)
08410	Other triable either way offences under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
08412	Infringing copyright in a work by communicating the work to the public
08413	Infringing a performer's making available right in the course of business or otherwise
08420	Falsification of records etc.
19588	Summary offences under Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
19589	Summary offences under Trade Marks Act 1994

Data for 2020 is due to be published on 20 May 2021.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Claire Hanna:

[518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) on delays in the PEACE PLUS programme and the effect of those delays on organisations who receive funding under that programme.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government has committed more than £500m to the PEACE PLUS programme. PEACE PLUS, like the past PEACE programmes, will provide the funds and opportunities for participation and dialogue, and will bring decision-making and responsibility for community development closer to the people who benefit directly.

I am delighted that the Special EU Programmes Body has undertaken extensive research and stakeholder engagement in development of the programme, including a public consultation, which closed earlier this month.

Whilst the programme is still under development, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I have heard the concerns raised by stakeholders about funding opportunities before PEACE PLUS opens for competitive bids. I would like to draw attention to some of the other significant funding opportunities that are available for bids now.

The UK Community Renewal Fund, worth £220m in total, has been launched to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022. It will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and support people into employment with £11 million of this funding set aside for Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the UK government will oversee a project competition directly, rather than through local councils.

More information on the Community renewal Fund is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22#introduction>

The Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. The Levelling Up Fund is a capital-only fund, and will also be overseen directly in Northern Ireland by the UK Government. We will be accepting bids at the most local level, from a range of local applicants, with a deadline for bid applications of 18 June.

More information on the Levelling up Fund is available at:

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

Finally, the Community Ownership Fund is a £150 million fund to help ensure that communities across the UK can support and continue benefiting from the local facilities, community assets and amenities most important to them. The Community Ownership Fund prospectus will be published at the end of June.

In the meantime, my officials continue to work with the EU Commission, the Special EU Programmes Body and the Northern Ireland Civil Service in preparation for the launch of the PEACE PLUS programme.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

■ Elections: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[2352]

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what plans the Commission has to review the extent of electronic political content promoted without an imprint for the Scottish Parliamentary Election held on 6 May 2021; and if he will he make a statement.

Christian Matheson:

The Commission welcomed the introduction of the new digital imprint requirement for all digital campaign material at the Scottish Parliamentary elections. It provides voters with a better understanding of who is trying to influence them online.

The Commission regulates compliance with the new law by registered parties, and by non-party campaigners who campaign for or against parties. The police are responsible for compliance by candidates, and non-party campaigning for or against candidates.

Ahead of the election, the Commission published guidance for campaigners on what must be included on election material. The Commission monitored compliance with the new regime closely, and will, as part of its post-poll reporting, report on the implementation and regulation of the requirements.

Alan Brown:**[2353]**

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what plans the Commission has to review the Independent Green Voice party entry and logo on the Scottish parliamentary election regional listing with regards to potential voter confusion with the Scottish Greens political party.

Christian Matheson:

The Commission assesses whether applications to register a political party, and their identity marks, meet the criteria set out in electoral law. This includes the requirement to ensure that voters would not likely be confused with already registered parties.

As part of its assessment process, the Commission publishes on its website a list of names, descriptions and emblems under consideration, to invite comments from the public and other parties.

Details were published on the Commission's website on 12 February 2021 of the application by Independent Green Voice to add a new emblem. No concerns were raised, and after a careful assessment process, the Commission authorised the application to register the emblem on 23 March.

The Commission has an ongoing duty to maintain the register of political parties including by reviewing registered identity marks if relevant considerations change. However, as matters stand it is satisfied that there are clear and sufficient differences between the two parties' registered names, descriptions and emblems to avoid likely voter confusion.

TRANSPORT**■ Coronavirus: Passenger Ships****Johnny Mercer:**[\[363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice he plans to give to people who are unable to book domestic cruise trips as a result of the cruise company's policy that passengers of all ages must be fully vaccinated against covid-19, including children for whom that vaccine has yet to be approved.

Robert Courts:

My Department is committed to the safe restart of cruise and monitoring the risk of transmission and will require passengers and crew to present a negative Covid-19 test prior to embarkation. However, the matter of mandating vaccinations in order to travel on domestic cruises in the UK is a matter for individual operators. This is a commercial matter, with cruise operators formulating their own policies on Covid-19 safety measures.

More information about safe domestic cruise travel in the UK can be found on the gov.uk website.

■ Cycling and Walking**Rachael Maskell:**[\[1118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to ensure that new planning proposals incorporate the Government's recommendations from its Gear Change initiative and the LTN1/20 guidance.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

My Department is working closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the forthcoming planning reforms to deliver on our commitment in Gear Change and ensure that walking, cycling and public transport are the first choice for journeys in new developments.

■ Motor Vehicles: Noise**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the trial of acoustic cameras, to reduce excessive noise pollution from illegally modified cars.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department's initial trial of a prototype acoustic camera has concluded. The outcome of the trial is currently being considered, including what further development would be required to enable the technology to be used for more targeted and efficient enforcement.

The Government anticipates the results from the initial trial will be published in the summer following a re-phasing of the work due to pressures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Railway Stations: Pedestrian Areas**Sarah Olney:** [\[1353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Answer of 5 March 2021 to Question 158995, when Network Rail plans to deliver a costed plan for a wider roll out of platform edge tactiles for stations, where tactiles are not being delivered under another programme; and what assessment he has made of whether a faster roll out of tactiles at stations is possible.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We are working with Network Rail to potentially accelerate the roll out of tactile edge paving, including a funding plan by autumn 2021.

Tactiles will be installed on over 100 accessible routes as part of Access for All programme by 2024. Whenever the industry installs, replaces or renews platform infrastructure, it must install tactiles.

■ Railways: Disability**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[1177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Questions 181389, 181390 and 181391 on Railways: Disability, what steps he is taking to increase public awareness of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard and badge scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is committed to ensuring that disabled people have the same access to transport services and opportunities to travel as other members of society and supports the Sunflower Lanyard and Card scheme. As part of our communications to support disabled people using and returning to the network, such as the Department's inclusive transport campaign 'it's everyone's journey', we will be signposting the support services available, including the Sunflower Lanyard and Card scheme.

■ Railways: England and Wales**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[1176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Questions 178622, 178623 and 178626, how many of the 1,110 miles of track were the (a) Government and (b) devolved Administrations responsible for.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail publish scheme by scheme data on electrification projects in table 66 of their annual return, which is available at <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/publications-and-resources/regulatory-and-licensing/annual-return/>

331 of those miles of electrification took place in Scotland, which the Scottish Government was responsible for. The remaining miles of electrification took place in England and Wales, which the UK Government was responsible for.

■ Railways: Franchises

Ian Mearns: [\[1289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what dates his Department wrote to the Public Accounts Committee regarding the progress of franchise termination negotiations since 4 November 2020; and whether that correspondence will be published.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department wrote to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee on 17 February 2021. At the moment, this correspondence remains confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

■ Railways: Standards

Ian Mearns: [\[1290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, under the terms of the contracts between Hitachi, the Government and Train Operators, who is liable for the financial costs of the disruption resulting from the recent withdrawal of services after the discovery of cracks in electric and electro-diesel trains constructed by Hitachi Rail.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In total, 182 Hitachi trains have been impacted by this issue. 122 of these trains have been procured via the Department's Intercity Express Programme contract with Agility Trains as the service provider, and the remaining 60 trains have been procured under conventional rolling stock leases. All 182 trains are maintained by Hitachi as the appointed manufacturer.

Under the Intercity Express Programme contract, if Agility Trains is unable to offer the train for service on a given day, they are not paid and must pay to resolve the issue to ensure trains are made available.

The agreements in place contain provisions that protect the taxpayer. I have been clear with the industry that I expect those who have the contractual performance and train availability obligations including Agility Trains, to fully compensate the taxpayer in this matter.

■ Railways: Tickets

Emma Hardy: [\[1378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to work with Railcard to extend the expiration date of railcards which have expired during the period of national covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department recognises that railcard holders have been unable to use their cards whilst travel restrictions are in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and railcard holders have not been able to benefit to the fullest extent over recent months.

Passenger demand has fallen dramatically over the last year and my Department recognises that recovery is uncertain. We will continue to work closely with industry on initiatives to encourage passengers back to the railway when the time is right.

However, many passengers are able to recover the cost of their railcard in a single trip over the period of validity of their railcard. Having carefully considered the situation, we are not discussing the prospects of offering refunds or extensions for railcard users.

■ Railways: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[1129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on rail services in York of the withdraw of the Hitachi 800s trains.

Rachael Maskell: [\[1130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the planned timescale is for resuming normal rail services through York after the withdraw of the Hitachi trains from service.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The withdrawal of Hitachi Series 800 trains from service on 8 May following safety checks has caused disruption to services on networks using these trains, primarily Great Western Railway, but also London North Eastern Railway (LNER), TransPennine Express and Hull Trains. Despite this, the majority of services to and from York have not been affected.

Following rigorous safety tests, operators, working closely with Hitachi and the Office of Rail and Road have confirmed that many trains can return to the network. With trains now returning to service, LNER expect to run a full timetable from week commencing 17 May.

■ South Western Railway

Chris Grayling: [\[1275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to instruct South Western Railway to reinstate pre-covid-19 outbreak levels of service between Epsom to London Waterloo.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

South Western Railway (SWR) has provided an increase in peak service between Epsom and London Waterloo from Monday 17 May, this represents an increase on previous service provision. SWR is currently running at 85% of pre-COVID levels, a 13% increase on the pre-17th May Timetable. Service levels will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure the capacity provided continues to meet the demand.

■ Tourism: Government Assistance

Sarah Olney:

[1160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to support the tourism industry in the next three months.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry and wider tourism sector because of Covid-19. Firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor.

In total, we estimate that as of the end of April 2021 the air transport sector benefited from around £7bn of Government support since the start of the pandemic. The extension of Government-backed loans and furlough payments announced at the budget build on this and will help ensure this vital and vibrant part of the UK economy is ready to bounce back in the wake of the pandemic.

As set out in the Global Travel Taskforce report, the Government will publish a Tourism Recovery Plan, outlining the longer-term recovery of the sector. The Government will set out proposals soon, including plans for a marketing campaign to welcome visitors back to the UK as soon as it is safe to do so.

■ Train Operating Companies: Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements

Sarah Olney:

[1352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the total level of expenditure on Emergency Recovering Measures Agreements for train operating companies is since October 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Train operators provide management accounts to government, and are paid by government, once per rail period and there are 13 such periods in each financial year. Reliable data therefore cannot be produced from 1 October exactly as the accounting dates do not align.

However, periodic data on operational support payments made to each franchised operator from 1 March 2020 to 6 February 2021, is published at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dft-payments-to-passenger-rail-operators-under-emergency-agreements>

Financial Year 2020-21 Rail Period 7 started on 20 September 2020, and 1 October 2020 fell within it.

The nine ERMA train operators include: C2C (Essex Thameside), South Western Railway, TransPennine Express, West Midlands Trains, Greater Anglia (East Anglia), GTR (Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern), Chiltern Railways, East Midlands Railways, and Avanti West Coast (West Coast Partnership).

TREASURY■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****John Howell:****[180]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of resolution 2370, entitled fighting fiscal injustice: the work of the OECD on taxation of the digital economy, passed at the Council of Europe on 20 April 2021; and whether the Government plans to take steps following the passing of that resolution.

Jesse Norman:

The Government notes the resolution and welcomes the Council's support for the work of the OECD's Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS).

The Government has been proactive in pressing for an international solution to the tax challenges posed by digitisation of the economy for a number of years.

It is a Government priority to reach a comprehensive global solution this year which includes outputs on both OECD Pillars: on both reallocation of taxing rights and minimum taxation.

Reaching agreement on this would be a major multilateral achievement that introduces stability into the international tax landscape.

Henry Smith:**[206]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to include wholesalers in the guidance for local authorities on the administration of the new Business Rates Relief Fund.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has announced a £1.5 billion pot of additional business rates relief for businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that have not otherwise been eligible for existing reliefs. The statement by the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government of 25 March 2021 explained the relief will be allocated to local authorities based on the stock of properties in the area and the sector-specific economic impacts of COVID-19.

Formal guidance will follow in due course, setting out the specific considerations that Local Authorities (LAs) should have regard for when providing relief. Relief will be for LAs to award on a discretionary basis. Funding will be available once the legislation relating to material change in circumstance provisions has passed and LAs have established their own local relief schemes. The Government will support LAs to do this as quickly as possible, including through new burdens funding.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[272\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential economic effect on the wholesale sector of the length of time taken to allocate funding under the new business rates relief fund.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[273\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to provide support for business rates to businesses outside the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors that have been affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[274\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he we will meet with the Federation of Wholesale Distributors to discuss developing a business rates support system for businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak outside the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[275\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including wholesalers in the guidance for local authorities on the administration of the new Business Rates Relief Fund.

Jesse Norman:

The government has announced a £1.5 billion pot of additional business rates relief for businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that have not otherwise been eligible for existing reliefs. The statement by the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government of 25 March 2021 explained the relief will be allocated to English local authorities based on the stock of properties in the area and the sector-specific economic impacts of COVID-19.

The devolved administrations will receive an additional £285 million through the Barnett formula as a result of this relief announcement. Wales will receive £90 million, Scotland £145 million and Northern Ireland £50 million. Business rates are devolved in Scotland and are therefore a matter for the Scottish Government.

Alberto Costa: [\[313\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on consumers of increases to custom charges on products sent between the EU and the UK.

Jesse Norman:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement seeks to reduce the costs for traders of customs processes introduced following the end of the transition period with the EU. It supports efficient customs arrangements and ensures that goods originating in the EU or UK are not subject to tariffs. For goods that do not meet requirements of the rules of origin, tariffs still apply. Products sent between the EU to the UK may also be liable for other charges such as excise duty and import VAT. The extent to which

any of these charges and impacts feed through to consumer prices is based on a range of factors including individual business decisions.

Ben Lake: [\[411\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to ensure that the new National Infrastructure Bank has a just transition mandate.

Jesse Norman:

It is a Government priority to ensure that the shift to a green economy happens in a way that levels up across the whole country.

As set out in the Budget, the UK Infrastructure Bank will pursue two core policy objectives through its interventions in the infrastructure market: to help tackle climate change, particularly meeting the UK's net zero emissions target by 2050; and to support regional and local economic growth.

The Bank will make independent investment decisions and will need to develop assessment criteria to decide which investments it will take forward in line with its objectives.

■ **Child Tax Credit: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna: [\[1218\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many households in Northern Ireland have been affected by the ending of the family element of child tax credit as a result of having no children on their claim who were born before 6 April 2017; and what estimate he has made of the amount of money to which those households have not been entitled for the tax year 2019-20.

Steve Barclay:

I refer the honourable member to my reply of 14 September 2020 (question 87710).

An estimate of the total entitlement foregone as a result of the changes on 6 April 2017 is not available for 2019-20 until tax credits finalised awards data for that year have been processed, which is expected to be completed by summer 2021.

■ **Housing: Fire Prevention**

Gareth Thomas: [\[49\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a VAT exemption for building materials used in remediation works on buildings identified as having fire safety defects; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

Under the current VAT rules, replacement cladding may qualify for a zero rate when the replacement cladding forms part of the original construction and the person requesting the replacement cladding is either the owner, developer or contractor during the original construction works. Otherwise, remediation work falls under repair and maintenance and attracts the standard rate of VAT.

The Government announced on 10 February 2021 that it would fully fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres and over in England. It was also announced that for low rise buildings between 11 metres and 18 metres, with a lower risk to safety, there will be new protection from the costs of cladding removal.

■ **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**

Ben Lake: [\[1369\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions officials in his Department has had with (a) officials in the Department for Work and Pensions and (b) the Welsh Government on the distribution of the Investment Reserve arising from the Miners' Pension Scheme.

Steve Barclay:

No such discussions have been held. Following the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee Report publication, the Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth has arranged to meet the Scheme Trustees with a view to agreeing a way forward. The Government will then respond to the Committee's report.

Ben Lake: [\[1370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the efficacy of Mineworkers' Pension Scheme for its members.

Steve Barclay:

Members of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme receive pensions around 33% higher in real terms as a result of the current arrangements. The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee have made a number of recommendations which the Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth will discuss with the Scheme Trustees before responding to the report.

■ **Mortgages: Government Assistance**

Sarah Olney: [\[1354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide immediate financial relief to all 250,000 families in closed mortgage books.

John Glen:

The Government has undertaken significant work to understand the circumstances of borrowers whose mortgages are held by inactive firms, and it has worked with the FCA to create additional options for these borrowers, including through the introduction of a Modified Affordability Assessment which allows mortgage lenders to waive the normal affordability checks for borrowers with inactive firms who meet certain criteria, such as not wishing to borrow more. It is also worth reiterating that not all of the 250,000 borrowers whose mortgages are held by inactive firms are mortgage prisoners, as the FCA estimate that around half of these borrowers already meet the normal risk appetite of lenders and so could switch to an active lender.

During the recent passage of the Financial Services Act, I announced that the Treasury will work with the FCA on a review of their existing data to provide further detail on the characteristics of borrowers who have mortgages with inactive firms and are unable to switch, despite being up to date with payments. The FCA will also review the effect of its recent interventions to remove regulatory barriers to switching for mortgage prisoners and will report on this by the end of November. The Treasury will use the results of this review to establish whether there are any further possible solutions that can be found for these borrowers that are practical and proportionate.

■ **Multinational Companies: Tax Avoidance**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[103\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 178895, if he will make it his policy to publish a detailed impact assessment of the potential effect of proposals under Pillar 2 of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) framework once international negotiations have concluded but prior to the UK ratifying or acceding to any agreement.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[104\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to require Parliamentary approval prior to the UK ratifying or acceding to any agreement under Pillar 2 of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) framework.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[105\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 178895, whether his Department has conducted internally a detailed impact assessment of the potential effects of implementing Pillar 2 of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) framework.

Jesse Norman:

It is a UK priority to reach a comprehensive two-pillar solution addressing the tax challenges of digitalisation.

The details of a final agreement, including on the exact framework for implementation, are still subject to international negotiation.

If a political agreement is reached and both pillars are implemented in the UK, they would be subject to standard tax policymaking process.

As per that process, significant tax measures are legislated for in parliament, with their impacts formally assessed through the OBR forecast process.

This will include legislation in the relevant Finance Bill, with impacts set out in a Tax Information and Impact Note upon the introduction of the legislation.

■ Revenue and Customs: Tax Avoidance

Andrew Rosindell: [102]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with HMRC on the use by HMRC of contractors that utilised disguised remuneration schemes.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 29 April 2021 to UIN 187286.

■ Social Security Benefits: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna: [1217]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many households in Northern Ireland have been affected by the loss of the child element of child tax credit and universal credit for a third or later child born on or after 6 April 2017 as a result of not meeting any listed exceptions; and how much money those affected households have not been entitled to as a result of the social security changes that took place on 6 April 2017 for the tax year 2019-20.

Claire Hanna: [931]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effect on families of the two-child limit on Child Tax Credit in Northern Ireland.

Steve Barclay:

The government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics related to the period up to April 2020 were published in July 2020 and can be accessed at [Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit claimants: statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of 2 children, April 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Table 5 shows that 5,540 families receiving Child Tax Credit in Northern Ireland were affected by the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children born on or after 6 April 2017. A further 230 families in Northern Ireland continued to receive support due to an exception.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) administers Universal Credit (UC) for Great Britain and therefore does not hold data relating to Northern Ireland. UC in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Social Security Agency.

An estimate of the total entitlement foregone as a result of the changes on 6 April 2017 is not available for 2019-20 until tax credits finalised awards data for that year have been processed, which is expected to be completed by summer 2021.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax: Fraud

Mr Kevan Jones: [77]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many investigations into land tax fraud his Department has conducted in each of the last five years.

Mr Kevan Jones: [78]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) methodology and (b) evidence HMRC used to estimate the alleged landfill tax fraud at £78 million prior to its raid on Niramax's offices in September 2015.

Jesse Norman:

Over the last five years HMRC have undertaken interventions into land tax fraud that have closed 1121 risks and generated £1.563 billion of yield.

HMRC's statutory duty of taxpayer confidentiality prevent them from commenting on the specifics of any case.

■ Tax Avoidance: Prosecutions**Andrew Rosindell:** [101]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many promoters and operators of disguised remuneration schemes now subject to the Loan Charge have been prosecuted for promoting and operating those schemes to date.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 29 April 2021 to UIN 187240.

Esther McVey: [227]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) promoters and (b) operators of schemes now subject to the Loan Charge have been prosecuted.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Right Honourable Member to the answer given on 29 April 2021 to UIN 187240.

■ Veterinary Services: Tax Avoidance**Ben Lake:** [412]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what impact assessment has been conducted of IR35 reform on the locum veterinary sector.

Jesse Norman:

The off-payroll working rules only apply to individuals who are working like employees under the current employment status tests, and do not apply to the self-employed.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published at Spring Budget 2021 set out that the reform of the off-payroll working rules is expected to affect up to 60,000 medium and large enterprises, about 180,000 individuals working through their own companies, and approximately 20,000 agencies nationally. The TIIN can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021>.

No specific assessment has been made of the potential effect on the locum veterinary sector.

WALES**■ Environment Protection: Wales**

Dr James Davies: [\[900105\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to promote the growth of green industries in North Wales.

Jonathan Gullis: [\[900107\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to promote the growth of green industries in North Wales.

David T C Davies:

We are backing the North Wales Growth Deal with £120m including for innovative net zero projects such as the Morlais tidal energy test facility. We are seeing a further 2 gigawatts of offshore wind in development. And we are also providing close to £5m for the Holyhead Hydrogen Hub.

■ Free Zones: Ynys Môn

Virginia Crosbie: [\[1418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a freeport on Anglesey on (a) jobs and (b) employment opportunities (i) on Anglesey and (ii) in North Wales.

Simon Hart:

Freeports will increase trade, create employment and attract investment. We want to ensure that the whole of the UK can benefit, and remain committed to establishing at least one Freeport in Wales as soon as possible.

■ Social Security Benefits: Wales

Christine Jardine: [\[900102\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the potential merits of proposals to devolve aspects of the benefits system to Wales in line with those powers devolved to Scotland.

Simon Hart:

None. Devolution of the benefits system is not an issue that is raised on the doorsteps of Wales and even the Welsh Government has not asked for powers equivalent to Scotland.

■ United Kingdom

Peter Gibson: [\[900101\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to strengthen the Union.

Simon Hart:

This Government is clear in our commitment to the Union as an unparalleled and successful partnership between our four great nations.

My Department and I are working across Whitehall to deliver strategic priorities for Wales that will level up communities, improve infrastructure, create jobs and economic growth.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Kickstart Scheme: Employment

Matt Vickers:

[547]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Kickstart scheme jobs have been approved nationally to date.

Mims Davies:

As of the 6th May 2021, there are over 200,000 jobs approved on the Kickstart Scheme.

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

■ Sign Language

Virginia Crosbie:

[1415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to bring forward legislative proposals on the legal recognition of British Sign Language; and what steps she has taken to ensure local authorities raise awareness of British Sign Language.

Justin Tomlinson:

On 18 March 2003 the UK government formally recognised that British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right. Provision for accessing services by users of BSL are covered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Existing equality legislation already means employers, service providers and public bodies have to provide services in BSL and other formats when it is reasonable to do so. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the needs of a range of protected characteristics, including disability.

■ Social Security Benefits

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:

[1172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether plans to increase the benefit cap.

Mims Davies:

There is a statutory duty to review the levels of the cap at least once in each Parliament and this will happen at the appropriate time. The current unusual economic period with potentially counter intuitive and shifting trends, will need be considered in the context of any decision regarding a review.

Claimants can approach their Local Authority for a Discretionary Housing Payment if they need additional support to meet rental costs.

■ Social Security Benefits: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna: [930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the two-child limit on benefits on child poverty levels in Northern Ireland.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

This Government is wholly committed to tackling child poverty. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to protect family incomes including by spending an additional £7.4 billion last year to strengthen the welfare system for those most in need, taking our total expenditure on welfare support for people of working age to an estimated £112bn in 2020/21.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help parents move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty. We are investing over £30 billion in our ambitious Plan for Jobs which is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country.

■ Social Security Benefits: Slough

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [1173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Slough are subject to the benefit cap.

Mims Davies:

Information on the number of people is not available. However, statistics for the number of households receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, who were subject to the Benefit Cap, by Parliamentary Constituency (including Slough), are published every three months and can be found at:

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

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

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

■ Universal Credit**Louise Haigh:**[\[1334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to reduce the backlog of assessments for universal credit.

Justin Tomlinson:

For the purposes of this response, I have assumed the Honourable Member is referring to Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) used to assess the health entitlement in Universal Credit when referring to “assessments.”

Throughout the pandemic following the suspension of face to face Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) to protect the health of our customers and staff, we continued to assess people on paper evidence whenever possible and introduced telephone assessments from May 2020, doing so in a cautious and evidence-based way, in order to reduce the risk of incorrect benefit outcomes.

Our priority was and continues to be to get our customers into payment as soon as possible. Therefore, telephone assessments initially focused on claimants who were most likely to benefit from having an assessment i.e. those who were likely to have limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA), with this being the only outcome available. Using a test and learn approach, we expanded the range of outcomes available in telephone assessments during the course of the pandemic and, from February 2021, the full range outcomes have been able. This is enabling us to provide a further telephone assessment to those customers who didn't get an outcome from their first one. We are also, in parallel, doing a small number of Video Assessments.

We have continuously improved our guidance and processes to minimise the number of customers for whom a telephone assessment is not suitable because of their health condition. Now only a small proportion of customers are unable to undertake a telephone assessment. These customers will be prioritised for a face to face assessment following their resumption this month.

■ Universal Credit: Northern Ireland**Claire Hanna:**[\[933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effect of the introduction of universal credit on women in Northern Ireland.

Will Quince:

The Department for Communities, part of the Northern Ireland Executive, is responsible for Universal Credit in Northern Ireland.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Post Office Update

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS40\]](#)

Following the Prime Minister's commitment on 26 February 2020 and the Ministerial Statements of 10 June 2020 and 30 September 2020, the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry was established as a non-statutory inquiry. In accordance with the terms of s.15 Inquiries Act, the government has now given notice to convert the Inquiry into a statutory inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 on 1st June 2021 and at the same time amend the Inquiry's terms of reference, as set out below.

Scope of the Inquiry

Government wants to be fully assured that through the Inquiry there is a public summary of the failings associated with Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system. The Inquiry will draw on the findings made by Mr Justice Fraser from the *Bates and others v Post Office Limited* Group Litigation (in particular Judgment (No3) 'Common Issues' and Judgment (No 6) 'Horizon issues'), the judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in *R v Hamilton and others*, and other judgments in which convictions have been quashed. It will consider all other relevant evidence, listen to those that have been affected, understand what went wrong, and assess whether lessons have been learned and whether concrete changes have taken place, or are underway, at Post Office Ltd.

The Inquiry shall:

A: Understand and acknowledge what went wrong in relation to Horizon, leading to the civil proceedings in *Bates and others v Post Office Limited* and the quashing of criminal convictions, by drawing from the judgments of Mr Justice Fraser in *Bates and others*, the judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in *R v Hamilton and others*, other judgments in which convictions have been quashed, affected postmasters' experiences and any other relevant evidence in order to identify what key lessons must be learned for the future.

B: Build upon the findings of Mr Justice Fraser and the judgments of the criminal courts specified in A above by obtaining all available relevant evidence from Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu, BEIS and UKGI to establish a clear account of 1) the implementation and failings of Horizon over its lifecycle and 2) Post Office Ltd's use of information from Horizon when taking action against persons alleged to be responsible for shortfalls.

C: Assess whether Post Office Ltd has learned the lessons from the criticisms made by Mr Justice Fraser in his judgments following the 'Common Issues' and 'Horizon Issues' trials and those identified by affected postmasters and has delivered or made good progress on the organisational and cultural changes necessary to ensure a similar case does not happen in the future.

D: Assess whether the commitments made by Post Office Ltd within the mediation settlement – including the historical shortfall scheme – have been properly delivered.

E: Assess whether the processes and information provided by Post Office Ltd to postmasters are sufficient:

i. to enable both parties to meet their contractual obligations

ii. to enable postmasters to run their businesses. This includes assessing whether Post Office Ltd's related processes such as recording and resolving postmaster queries, dispute handling, suspension and termination are fit for purpose. In addition, determine whether the quality of the service offer for postmasters and their relationship with Post Office Ltd has materially improved since the conclusions reached by Mr Justice Fraser.

F: Examine the historic and current governance and whistleblowing controls in place at Post Office Ltd, identify any relevant failings, and establish whether current controls are now sufficient to ensure that failing leading to the issues covered by this Inquiry do not happen again.

The Inquiry will consider only those matters set out in the preceding sections A-F. The Inquiry will not consider any issue which is outside the scope of the powers conferred upon the Inquiry by the Inquiries Act 2005. The Horizon group damages settlement (albeit the Inquiry may examine the events leading to the settlement), and/or the engagement or findings of any other supervisory or complaints mechanisms, including in the public sector, are outside the Inquiry's scope.

Governance

The Inquiry will be led by Sir Wyn Williams FLSW, as the Chair of the Inquiry. There will be an Inquiry Secretariat and Sir Wyn will be supported by up to 4 assessors. These assessors will support Sir Wyn Williams by providing advice on the sources, content and interpretation of evidence received as appropriate. They may also provide independent scrutiny and challenge in relation to emerging findings and recommendations.

Publication report date

The Inquiry should make any recommendations it sees fit, including actions that may, in its view, be appropriate as a result of its findings. The Inquiry will aim to submit its findings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in Autumn 2022. The final report will be published by the Secretary of State and the government will respond in due course.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ The First Implementation Plan for Genome UK

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):

[\[HCWS41\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Innovation (Lord Bethell of Romford) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Last September, after months of hard work across the UK genomics community, I was delighted to launch *Genome UK* – the UK’s genomic healthcare strategy.

Ultimately, the strategy set out a vision to create the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world to deliver better healthcare at a lower cost.

Thanks to achievements made over the last 70 years, from the discovery of the structure of DNA to the completion of the 100,000 Genomes Project, the UK is rightly recognised as a world-leader in genomics.

But for the UK to remain at the forefront of international competition in genomic research and healthcare, and attract investment, it is essential that we start to deliver on the commitments set out in our strategy.

I am therefore delighted to inform the House of the launch of the 2021/22 Genome UK Implementation Plan. This publication will demonstrate the great strides we have already made in delivering on our vision and outlines the clear actions we will progress over the next year.

This Implementation Plan has been agreed by members of the National Genomics Board, a group of senior life sciences sector stakeholders, which I chair with Sir John Bell. Over the last six months, we have engaged with our delivery partners and key stakeholders to identify projects and programmes that can be delivered during 2021/22.

We have drafted a diverse and ambitious package of actions and as part of this, I am pleased to announce the following:

- A major drive, led by Genomics England, to improve the diversity of genomic data, addressing the historic under-representation of data from minority ethnic communities in genomic datasets, which results in health inequalities. The work will include widespread community engagement alongside sequencing and analytic tool development.
- The roll-out of whole genome sequencing to patients with a suspected rare disease and certain cancers in the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, in partnership with Genomics England. This is a truly transformational milestone for patients, and for our overarching one million genomes commitment – our ambition to sequence 500,000 genomes in the NHS and 500,000 in UK Biobank, creating the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world.
- Proof of concept work, led by Genomics England in partnership with the NHS, to deliver the first phase of a next-generation approach for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, integrating multiple data sources and new technologies to support faster and more comprehensive genomic testing for cancer in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.
- Our Future Health (formerly known as the Accelerating Detection of Disease challenge) will help drive developments in the next generation of diagnostics and clinical tools – including the evaluation of polygenic risk scores (PRS), drug discovery, and smart clinical trials. In 2021, Our Future Health will pilot participant recruitment processes to build towards their five million participant ambition. Our

Future Health will conduct feedback pilot studies in 2022 to test approaches to deliver health-related information, including PRS, to participants.

- NIHR, MRC and Wellcome Trust will, over the next five years, provide funding to the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) to develop standards and policies for sharing genomic and related health data. GA4GH aims to ensure its standards are easily accessible and ready for use by global genomic programs and data sharing initiatives. It will proactively engage stakeholders at national and organisational level to drive uptake of GA4GH standards.

Given that *Genome UK* runs over ten years, some of its 45 commitments are either long term or will be delivered through cumulative action over the coming years.

Implementation of the strategy will therefore be phased, so we have mainly focused on actions taking place this year. Genomics is a fast-moving field, and a phased approach will allow us to review our commitments and reflect emerging science and the latest research findings. Our intention is to align future iterations of this plan with Government funding cycles.

These commitments are just some of the first important steps on the journey to realising the vision set out in *Genome UK*. However, achieving all our objectives will require new investment over the next decade, with continued collaboration and funding from the public, private and charity sectors becoming ever more important.

Genomic research and innovation will transform healthcare in this country to benefit patients and drive our economic recovery. Given our reputation as a world-leader in genomic healthcare and research, it has the potential to play a key role in delivering our wider goal of becoming a global life sciences hub.

This iteration of the implementation plan is largely England-focused, but some aspects are UK-wide. For example, the world-leading research programs, including COG-UK, the consortium which delivered large scale covid genome sequencing. We have therefore developed this plan with the support of our partners in the Devolved Administrations.

We will continue to work with our partners from the Devolved Administrations, the NHS, industry and research, via the National Genomics Board and other venues, to ensure that we deliver on our goal to create the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world. I also want to emphasise that engagement and dialogue with the healthcare workforce, patients and the diverse UK population, will be at the heart of the journey to reach the vision set out in the strategy.

TREASURY

■ **PrivatBank (Recognition of Third-Country Resolution Action) Instrument 2021**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):

[\[HCWS39\]](#)

I wish to update the House on the steps that HM Treasury has taken in regard to Public Joint Stock Company Commercial Bank PrivatBank (PrivatBank).

On the 14 May 2021 I approved the Bank of England's decision to recognise the bail-in by the National Bank of Ukraine and the Ukrainian authorities between the 18th–20th December 2016 of four English law governed loans made by UK SPV Credit Finance plc to PrivatBank, in accordance with Section 89H of the Banking Act 2009. The Bank of England instrument which gave effect to the recognition decision will be laid before Parliament today and has been published on the Bank of England website.

The Bank of England and HM Treasury have independently reached the determination that the bail-in of the four loans was broadly comparable in anticipated results and objectives to an equivalent UK resolution, and that none of the conditions for refusal to recognise within section 89H(4) of the Banking Act 2009 were satisfied.

Decisions over whether to recognise a third-country resolution action are regarded by the Financial Stability Board as a key aspect of an effective cross-border resolution regime. Under UK law, the Bank of England is required to make a decision on whether or not to recognise resolution actions when requested to do so by a third-country resolution authority, that decision can only be made with the approval of HM Treasury.