



Daily Report

Tuesday, 25 May 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 25 May 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:28 P.M., 25 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Peter Dowd:

[2313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Government allocated to the UK-China Green Finance Centre in 2019-20.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK-PACT) China Programme has spent £32,154.08 supporting the UK-China Green Finance Centre. The UK-China Green Finance Centre's mission is to enhance UK and China green finance cooperation to accelerate the global transition to an environmentally sustainable future. UK PACT's contribution to the UK-China Green Finance Centre is part of a wider grant supporting the City of London Green Finance Initiative and China Green Finance Committee. UK PACT has supported a number of influential initiatives under the Centre over the past two years, most notably the UK-China Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) Pilot Working Group; and the Green Investment Principles (GIPs).

Peter Dowd:

[2314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Government has allocated to the China-UK PACT since its inception.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Up to £5m has been approved for the UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT) Programme in China between 2018-2022. This programme is a demand-led technical assistance programme, working with high-emitting ODA eligible countries to support their low carbon transition in high impact areas. UK PACT China focuses on green finance, which China has recognised as critical to its climate mitigation. Greening China's financial system and investment decisions is critical to climate mitigation globally and essential to meeting of the Paris Agreement. It is also central to UK's objectives as COP26 upcoming Presidents.

■ Additional Restrictions Grant

Taiwo Owatemi:

[2462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the localised administration of the Additional Restrictions Grant, what mechanism exists for people whose place of business and home address fall under the jurisdictions of different local authorities.

Paul Scully:

The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allows Local Authorities to put in place discretionary business support. Local Authorities are free to provide support that suits

their local area, including to support those businesses not required to close but which have had their trade severely affected by the restrictions, and those businesses that fall outside the business rates system such as market traders. At Budget on 3 March, the Chancellor announced an additional £425 million would be made available via the ARG, meaning that more than £2 billion has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020.

Businesses can apply for a grant from the Local Authority to which it pays business rates. Businesses that do not pay business rates can apply to the Local Authority where the business is located. For example, if a business is based in Derby but registered in a different Local Authority, then it would apply for a grant from Derby City Council.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage: Finance

Stuart Anderson:

[\[2448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding the Government has allocated to new carbon capture technologies.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Research and innovation into CCUS has been a key priority for the UK. Between 2004-2019 the UK has provided over £295m in public funding for CCUS Research and Innovation. In the BEIS Energy Innovation Programme (2011-2016) more than £41m was provided to CCUS innovation projects. These were funded by the Call for CCUS Innovation, Carbon Capture & Utilisation Demonstration (CCUD) programme and the Energy Entrepreneur Fund (EEF) scheme.

Under the Net Zero Innovation Portfolio (2021-2025), the BEIS CCUS Innovation 2.0 programme is seeking to fund next generation CCUS technology with up to £20m available.

The Carbon Capture and Storage Infrastructure Fund (CIF) which is expected to support Transport & Storage and Industrial Carbon Capture was first announced at the Budget in March 2020, and its allocation of £1bn was confirmed at the Spending Review in November 2020.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[2333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many fixed penalty notices have been issued to employers for knowingly allowing a person who is required to self-isolate to work other than where they are self-isolating since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

It is an offence for an employer to knowingly allow a person who is required to self-isolate to work anywhere other than where they are self-isolating. If an employer is reasonably believed to be in breach of this requirement, they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice, ranging from £1,000 to £10,000.

Local Authorities provide written and verbal advice to businesses to enable them to comply with their obligations. Enforcement action is taken against employers who do not follow this advice and who do not take reasonable steps to ensure that their workers who must be self-isolating are not working from outside their home.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

Emma Hardy:

[2419]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Green Homes Grant scheme until 31 March 2022.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme was designed to provide a short-term economic stimulus while tackling our contribution to climate change. However, it was not delivering at the rate and scale we had originally intended. The scheme closed on 31 March 2021 and will not reopen.

We will refocus efforts and funding on alternative approaches which will maximise delivery of home retrofits for consumers who are most in need.

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment for both the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund with £300 million of new funding.

■ **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Alexander Stafford:

[2494]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the Government's net zero by 2050 target.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK has achieved record clean growth - between 1990 and 2019, our economy grew by 78% while our emissions decreased by 44%, this is the fastest rate in the G7. We have built on this, setting out concrete steps to reach net zero by 2050, for instance through my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan which brought together £12 billion of government investment, our Energy White Paper and Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy.

The Government has also laid legislation for the UK's sixth carbon budget, proposing a target which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels, marking a decisive step towards net zero by 2050.

Ahead of COP26, we will bring forward further bold proposals, including a Net Zero Strategy, to cut emissions and create new jobs and industries across the whole country – going further and faster towards building a stronger, more resilient future and protecting our planet for this generation and those to come.

■ Hospitality Industry: Mobile Phones

Catherine West:

[\[4651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of increased smartphone use in hospitality settings on people without digital access.

Paul Scully:

Hospitality venues have a legal requirement to support NHS Test and Trace by keeping a record of all their customers, visitors and staff for 21 days. Customers can check in using the NHS COVID-19 app, but venues must also make sure that there is a method of checking in that does not rely on the customer using a smartphone or other technology, in order not to digitally exclude people without digital access.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Alexander Stafford:

[\[2496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on improving policy on the decarbonisation of homes.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Decarbonising almost all buildings is essential to achieving our net zero emissions target. There has been consistent communications between my Rt. Hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, along with wider Government on the challenge of buildings decarbonisation, as reflected in the Energy White Paper and the Prime Ministers Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution.

■ Natural Gas

Alexander Stafford:

[\[2495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to phase out unabated natural gas from the power sector.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As we transition to net zero emissions by 2050, our record levels of investment in renewables will meet a large part of the energy demand. However, we recognise that unabated natural gas will provide a reliable source of energy, ensuring security of supply whilst we develop and deploy low carbon alternatives that can replicate its role in the electricity system.

In order to meet our ambitious decarbonisation targets for the electricity system, we are taking steps to bring forward alternative low carbon technologies which will help us to reduce the reliance on unabated gas-powered electricity generation as much as possible. For example, in the Energy White Paper (published last year), government announced that it will support the deployment of at least one power plant with carbon

capture, usage and storage (CCUS) to be operational by 2030, and that it will also consult in 2021 on its Carbon Capture and Readiness requirements to ensure that new thermal plants can convert to low-carbon alternatives. Government is developing business models to incentivise the deployment of CCUS in the UK.

Additionally, we are exploring policy frameworks to support the deployment of low carbon hydrogen, as well flexibility tools such as demand reduction, demand side response, and storage, which likewise have the potential to reduce reliance on unabated natural gas in the power sector.

■ New Businesses and Small Businesses

Sajid Javid: [\[1425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to (a) entrepreneurs and (b) people who wish to expand their small businesses.

Paul Scully:

The Government has put measures in place to support businesses of all sizes and stages of growth.

The Start Up Loans Company is part of the Government-backed British Business Bank and offers support to start or grow new businesses and those in operation for up to 24 months. Loans of up to £25,000 are available to individuals aged 18 and over, repayable across 1 to 5 years at a competitive fixed rate of 6%. These loans include 12 months of free mentoring from an industry expert.

The Government's new 'Help to Grow' scheme will help small businesses across the UK to learn new skills, reach new customers, and boost profits. Help to Grow: Management will provide intensive management skills support to 30,000 small businesses. Help to Grow: Digital could support 100,000 small businesses with online advice and a voucher for software costs.

The Business Support Helpline and the 38 Growth Hubs across England also offer tailored advice to businesses and entrepreneurs seeking financial support, as well as joining up national and local support.

The Government's business advice pages on GOV.UK, including the business finance finder search tool, provide information and guidance relevant to starting, growing and maintaining a business, as well as statutory rights and obligations, and links to support provided by devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

■ Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[2213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the mechanisms are for publishing the report of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Paul Scully:

As per the revised Terms of Reference for the Inquiry that I made in the House in a Written Ministerial Statement on 19 May, the Inquiry will aim to submit its findings to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy by Autumn 2022. The final report will be published by the Secretary of State and the Government will respond in due course.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[2215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether a transcript of evidence will be (a) collated, (b) made available to hon. Members and (c) published after the conclusion of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Paul Scully:

On 19 May, I announced that the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry would be made a statutory inquiry from 1 June 2021. The Inquiry will set out its working procedures which will be issued in September 2021.

■ Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry: Costs**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[2216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what associated costs have accrued to the public purse as a result of the setting up of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Paul Scully:

The associated costs that have accrued as a result of the setting up of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry are £459,000 as of April 30th 2021.

■ Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry: Post Office**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[2205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited will be asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[2206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Chairman of Post Office Limited will be asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[2207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the former Chief Executive Officer of Post Office Limited in post from 2012 to 2019 will be asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Mr Kevan Jones: [2208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which retired and in-service civil servant post holders will be asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Mr Kevan Jones: [2209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which former Ministers will be asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Mr Kevan Jones: [2210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether officials of UK Government Investments will be asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Paul Scully:

The Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry is independent of the Department, and so BEIS does not have information on who will be called to appear before it to give evidence at the Inquiry hearings. This is for Sir Wyn Williams to decide as Chair of the Inquiry.

■ Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry: Witnesses

Mr Kevan Jones: [2204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the evidence given by witnesses to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry will be taken under oath.

Paul Scully:

I announced to the House on 19 May that the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry will be established as a statutory public inquiry on 1 June. This will enable Sir Wyn Williams to take evidence from witnesses under oath should he wish to do so.

Mr Kevan Jones: [2214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people have been asked to give evidence to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Paul Scully:

The Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry is independent of the Department, and so BEIS does not have information on the number of people that have been asked to give evidence to the Inquiry.

■ Post Offices: ICT

Lucy Allan: [2327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on when the Principal Accounting Officer with responsibility for the Post Office Ltd became aware that the Horizon Accounting System was faulty.

Paul Scully:

Concerns about the Horizon system were raised with the Department publicly, including in Parliament, and these are a matter of public record. BEIS relied on the Post Office's management to investigate issues with the Horizon system and was assured that the system was robust and that the issues raised by the postmasters were being handled appropriately. The Department was aware upon the handing down of the Common Issues Judgement by Justice Fraser in March 2019 that there were serious issues with the Horizon IT System. This was confirmed in the Horizon Issues Judgement in December 2019.

The Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, led by Sir Wyn Williams, will establish a clear account of the implementation and failings of Horizon over its lifecycle and the Department is fully cooperating with the Inquiry as are both the Post Office and Fujitsu.

Lucy Allan:[\[2328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his department holds on whether the Principal Accounting Officer with responsibility for the Post Office Ltd was aware of the budget for the legal costs of defending the Post Office group litigation.

Paul Scully:

The Principal Accounting Officer has been sighted with quarterly updates relating to Post Office Ltd's (POL) change spend (including litigation) costs since 2018/19. Additionally, the Principal Accounting Officer is also sighted on POL's annual budgets which includes forecasted legal costs.

Lucy Allan:[\[2329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on whether the Principal Accounting Officer with responsibility for the Post Office Ltd authorised the use of public money for purposes of resisting resolution of the Post Office group litigation.

Paul Scully:

While Post Office Ltd is publicly owned, it operates as an independent, commercial business. Unless otherwise specified in the Articles of Association, spending including spend on legal costs is treated as an operational matter for the Post Office. It funded all litigation costs related to the Group Litigation Order.

Mr Peter Bone:[\[900534\]](#)

What progress the Government has made in compensating people affected by failings associated with the Post Office Horizon IT system.

Paul Scully:

The Government is providing sufficient financial support for the Historical Shortfall Scheme to proceed, and scheme payments have begun. We will also continue to work with Post Office Limited to ensure Postmasters whose convictions were overturned are fairly compensated.

■ Renewable Energy: Finance**Caroline Lucas:**[\[2253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 185847 on increasing support for community energy, whether the Government has undertaken a cost-benefit analysis to inform the Net Zero Strategy of the potential merits of increasing support to community energy groups in (a) urban and (b) rural areas to (i) develop renewable energy projects, (ii) provide economic and social benefits and (iii) act as catalysts for raising awareness and promoting behaviour change.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We continue to monitor the cost effectiveness of local and community energy solutions in the context of developing policy options for the Net Zero Strategy. The Government will be considering a wide range of proposals to support climate change action at the local and community level in that Strategy.

■ Renewable Energy: Heating**Alan Brown:**[\[2354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to support the scale up of heat pump installations to achieve the 2028 target of 600,000 per year.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is bringing forward a wide-ranging package of policies to support the development of the heat pump market towards our ambition for 600,000 installations per year by 2028.

This package includes targeted regulations such as the Future Homes Standard from 2025, which will ensure that new homes are built zero carbon-ready without the need for costly retrofitting; our commitment to phase out the installation of high-carbon fossil-fuel heating off the gas grid; and market-based measures which will put industry at the heart of efforts to develop the UK heat pump market.

We are also supporting the installation of heat pumps through planned funding schemes, such as the Clean Heat Grant and, taking action alongside industry on a range of other enablers for the growth of the heat pump market, including on installer skills and training, energy network upgrades, and the development of the green finance market.

Our forthcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy and a number of policy consultations alongside it will set out further detail on key parts of this policy package.

■ Research: Government Assistance**Stephen Metcalfe:**[\[900532\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support UK research and development.

Amanda Solloway:

We have committed to investing £14.9 billion in R&D in 2021/22, meaning Government R&D spending is now at its highest level in four decades.

We are working to ensure the benefits are felt nationwide, with our UK Innovation Strategy and R&D Places Strategy due to be published this summer.

Restart Grant Scheme: Photographs**Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[2260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason photography studios are no longer in the leisure services category for covid-19 support grants.

Mr Toby Perkins:[\[2261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department made of the potential effect of the decision on the level of coronavirus restart grant to be awarded to photography studios on the revenue of those studios in the context of the restrictions placed on their business as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Toby Perkins:[\[2262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review the decision to award photography studios a £2,600 restart grant; and if he will allocate additional funds to local authorities so that a grant of £8,000 can be awarded to those studios.

Paul Scully:

The Restart Grants announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 March 2021 are one-off grants to businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors, to support businesses to reopen as Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed.

Strand One of the Restart Grants aims to support non-essential retail with grants of up to £6,000. Strand Two is to support hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses, with grants of up to £18,000. The higher amount is in recognition that these sectors will have been allowed to open at a later date and are likely to be more severely impacted by remaining restrictions.

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, and 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.

Local Authorities in England have also been allocated £2bn in additional funding via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), to provide essential support that best suits their area. The latest FAQs issued to Local Authorities on 6 May explain that ARG

funding can be used as a top-up for businesses that are in receipt of grants under other schemes.

Further guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

■ Trade Remedies: Iron and Steel

Holly Mumby-Croft: [900542]

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the role of trade remedies in protecting the UK steel industry.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and I have discussed this on several occasions. Trade remedies are an important mechanism to protect UK industry from unfair international competition and I support her plans to review whether the UK's trade remedies framework should be strengthened.

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions

Alexander Stafford: [2498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on ensuring that the UK transport sector is on track to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognises the urgency of stepping up the pace of progress, to ensure that the transport sector plays its part in supporting the delivery of the UK's emissions reduction targets.

Ministerial discussions on climate and net zero are held primarily through the Climate Action Strategy Committee (CAS), which is chaired by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister and determines the UK's overarching climate strategy, and the Climate Action Implementation Committee (CAI), which supports the CAS to operationalise the UK's domestic and international climate strategy. The CAI considers matters relating to the delivery of COP26, net zero and building the UK's resilience to climate impacts and ensure the delivery of plans for addressing these areas, including the transport sector.

Departmental officials are also working closely with officials from the Department of Transport. Part 1 of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan was published in March 2020, with Part 2, containing policies and proposals to be published as soon as possible. We will also publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Sajid Javid:

[\[1423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to work with representatives of the wedding industry on pilot schemes to facilitate the easing of social distancing restrictions on ceremonies and receptions.

Paul Scully:

BEIS Ministers and officials meet with representatives of the sector-led UK Weddings Taskforce on a regular basis to discuss the challenges faced by the sector and how best to support it through the pandemic.

Information provided by the Weddings Taskforce is contributing to the Events Research Programme and helping us draw conclusions on how to bring about the return of larger weddings after Step 4.

CABINET OFFICE

■ 11 Downing Street: Repairs and Maintenance

Cat Smith:

[\[3021\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, who the suppliers were for the most recent refurbishment and renovation of the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street; and what the criteria were for selecting those suppliers.

Julia Lopez:

Works funded by the Cabinet Office have been undertaken by Mitie. Mitie has a framework agreement with the Cabinet Office for works on the Downing Street estate.

Works funded personally by the Prime Minister were contracted privately.

■ Civil Service: Career Development

Mark Pritchard:

[\[4572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Social Mobility Commission report, Navigating the labyrinth, published in May 2021, what steps he plans to take to support career progression in the civil service.

Julia Lopez:

The Civil Service must harness the broadest range of talent across every part of the UK.

Our plans for government reform and modernisation, which we will set out soon, will show how we will continue to do this by increasing opportunity and supporting career progression for all.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Dr Philippa Whitford: [4616]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the immunological limits of covid-19 status certification.

Ben Lake: [4665]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential immunological risks of covid-19 status certification.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government committed to explore whether and how COVID-status certification might be used to reopen our economy, reduce restrictions on social contact and improve safety. As set out in the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021,' the Government will set out its conclusions on the COVID-status Certification Review in advance of Step 4 of the Roadmap, in order to inform the safe reopening of society and the economy.

An update on the Roadmap Reviews was published on 5 April and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021-reviews-terms-of-reference/roadmap-reviews-update>.

■ Coronavirus: Young People

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [4585]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people under the age of 35 without a co-morbidity have died from covid-19 in English hospitals since the outbreak of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [4586]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people under the age of 35 have died from covid-19 in English hospitals since the outbreak of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQs 4585, 4586 [UKSA's response to PQs 4585 and 4586.pdf]

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Sarah Owen: [4707]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with local government on the proposed changes to Voter ID.

Julia Lopez:

Cabinet Office worked closely with local authorities to successfully deliver voter identification pilots in 2018 and 2019. We continue to work with local authorities and other stakeholders, including charities and civil society organisations, to make sure that voter identification works for all voters.

■ Sovereignty: Scotland**Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[3819\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to make arrangements for the Scottish people to demonstrate their (a) consent and (b) opposition to the Union.

Julia Lopez:

Our full focus must be on recovering from the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has created, on helping our NHS, our schools and our economic recovery. These are challenges that all parts of the UK face and our collective priority right now should be on tackling them together. That is what people across the UK want and expect.

COP26**■ Offshore Industry: Environment Protection****Alan Brown:**[\[3954\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (b) officials in that Department and (c) industry bodies on using the COP26 climate change conference to promote the North Sea Transition Deal.

Alok Sharma:

I have regular discussions with my Cabinet colleagues, including the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The UK Government has committed to supporting its transition to clean energy through the North Sea Transition Deal.

The Deal will focus on the decarbonisation of domestic oil and gas production while using the capabilities of the sector to deliver CCS and Hydrogen production. This will support and sustain new high-quality jobs and anchor the supply chain in the UK.

■ Renewable Energy: Seas and Oceans**Alan Brown:**[\[3953\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) industry bodies on using the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference to promote Scotland's marine renewables sector.

Alok Sharma:

I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues, including the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to help promote the UK's clean energy transition. I have met with companies in the renewable energy industry in Scotland to explore how they can support a successful COP26. The Government has a long history of supporting the development and deployment of wave and tidal stream technologies in the UK, including in Scotland. Since 2003 various bodies across Government have provided innovation/R&D funding of £175m to the wave and tidal sectors (almost £80m since 2010).

DEFENCE**■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[2218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 80, how many AJAX vehicles have been accepted in service by the British Army.

Jeremy Quin:

A total of 14 non-turreted Capability Drop 1 AJAX vehicles are in service with the Field Army for experimentation and training use. A further 15 Capability Drop 1 turreted AJAX vehicles are currently going through General Acceptance Testing.

■ Defence: Space Technology

John Healey: [\[4517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the Defence Space Strategy.

James Heappey:

We aim to publish the Defence Space Strategy after the National Space Strategy later this year.

John Healey: [\[4520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel are working in the UK defence space sector as at 20 May 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

The UK space sector as a whole directly employed 45,100 people in 2018-19. We do not hold information on how many personnel are working specifically in defence-related functions as part of the UK space sector.

■ Hawk Aircraft

Virginia Crosbie: [\[2490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to make efficiencies in the Hawk UK programme (a) in the UK and (b) on Anglesey.

Jeremy Quin:

It was announced in the Defence Command Paper that Hawk T1 aircraft would be retired from combat support roles reflecting improvements in synthetic training capabilities.

Work continues on the optimum drawdown profile and transition to new operational training capabilities. It is therefore too early to determine what efficiencies might be implemented for the Hawk fleet in the UK as a whole or on Anglesey.

■ Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation**Rachael Maskell:**[\[900397\]](#)

What steps he is taking to meet his obligations under the UN Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The UK is fully committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons and continues to press for steps towards multilateral nuclear disarmament within the framework of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We are leading the work to develop technical solutions for verifying nuclear disarmament, and building the trust and confidence needed to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict and enhance mutual security.

■ Reserve Forces: Training**John Healey:**[\[4519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the average amount of training time given to the armed forces reservists each year between 2010 and 2021.

James Heappey:

No estimate has been made of the average amount of training time given to Armed Forces reservists. The number of reservists varies throughout each year and, as a result, there is no fixed point in any year at which an average could be calculated.

■ Satellites: Scotland**John Healey:**[\[4516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department has allocated to achieve the goal of launching a British satellite from Scotland by 2022 as announced in November 2020.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is working closely with the UK Space Agency (UKSA) to support the delivery of commercial UK launch. The UKSA is funding a range of industry-led projects to help grow the UK's spaceflight capabilities.

■ Shipbuilding

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[4612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy is planned to include a commitment that Government-funded vessels will be built in the UK through a competitive process.

Jeremy Quin:

The Defence and Security Industrial Strategy set out the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) policy that the procurement approach for each class of Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel will henceforth be decided on a case-by-case basis. As well as considering the specific capability requirements, we will consider the long-term industrial impact of different options, including delivering value for money for our overall programme and maintaining the key industrial capabilities required for operational independence. Overall, we consider that a regular drumbeat of design and manufacturing work is needed to maintain the industrial capabilities critical for our national security and to drive efficiencies which will reduce longer-term costs in the shipbuilding portfolio.

Other Government-funded shipbuilding programmes will be run in accordance with our international treaty obligations and the UK's procurement regulations. The Government is also taking steps to continue the roll out of a minimum of 10 per cent social value weighting to defence procurement.

■ Space Technology: Investment

John Healey:

[\[2881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what investment his Department plans to provide to private space companies to help strengthen the UK's space industry.

Jeremy Quin:

Defence will invest an additional £1.4 billion over 10 years on space in support of the Integrated Review commitment.

We are also working closely with BEIS to develop the UK's first national space strategy that will take an integrated approach and set out how we will support the UK space sector to realise the benefits from this dynamic market.

■ Type 23 Frigates and Type 45 Destroyers

John Healey:

[\[4518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days each of the (a) Type-45 Destroyers and (b) Type 23 Frigates spent at sea between 2015 and 2020.

Jeremy Quin:

The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Type 23 Frigates:

FRIGATE	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
ARGYLL	25	0	111	141	101	191
IRON DUKE	85	132	94	0	4	0
KENT	124	67	0	57	172	155
LANCASTER	157	0	0	0	6	144
MONMOUTH	68	113	209	131	37	10
MONTROSE	0	0	41	145	198	227
NORTHUMBERLAND	48	0	0	117	146	154
PORTLAND	107	176	41	0	0	0
RICHMOND	180	73	51	0	11	190
SOMERSET	131	113	95	60	0	0
ST ALBANS	122	136	138	120	77	0
SUTHERLAND	127	127	103	166	103	161
WESTMINSTER	0	0	126	152	131	114

Type 45 Destroyers:

DESTROYER	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
DARING	48	148	85	0	0	0
DAUNTLESS	114	2	0	0	0	29
DIAMOND	27	118	116	99	14	71
DRAGON	69	56	56	145	163	110
DEFENDER	106	115	0	84	183	129
DUNCAN	188	86	107	135	153	0

The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes, periods of refit and Departmental planning requirements. In addition, these figures represent days at sea, and it should be noted that, while deployed away from the UK, ships will spend both days at sea and alongside in ports around the world.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Low Incomes**

Gill Furniss: [4654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure broadband is affordable to people on low incomes.

Matt Warman:

In response to Covid-19, the Government and Ofcom agreed a set of commitments with the UK's major broadband and mobile operators to support vulnerable consumers. Providers committed to working with customers who are finding it difficult to pay their bill to ensure that they were treated fairly and appropriately supported, in addition to providing new and generous landline and mobile offers, such as free or low cost mobile data boosts.

A range of broadband social tariff packages are already available in the market to support those on low incomes or who receive specific benefits. BT, for example, recently announced a Home Essentials package to launch in June which will provide fibre and voice services to those on Universal Credit and certain other legacy benefits for £15 per month. Hyperoptic and other providers are offering similar packages to assist on low incomes. The Government continues to encourage all fixed-line providers to introduce a social tariff offer so as to ensure those on low incomes have affordable access to services and information.

In addition, the Government has strengthened Ofcom's consumer protection rules, to ensure that consumers can access the right information to make informed decisions about new services, have stronger contract rights, and switch between providers more easily. The Government's work complements that of the regulator particularly its vulnerability guide issued in July 2020, which set out how the sector should support those with financial, health or emotional issues.

■ Camelot Group: Licensing

Alexander Stafford: [4078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the Statement of Reasons relating to the renewal of Camelot's National Lottery licence, originally published in August 2007.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The competition for the third National Lottery Licence was run by the National Lottery Commission, which was merged with the Gambling Commission in October 2013. The Commission announced the outcome of the competition on 7th August 2007, at which time it also published the 'Statement of Reasons'. This can be found through the National Archives [website](#).

■ Music: EU Countries

Stephen Morgan:

[3133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the provisions in the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement on tariff-free movement of equipment for TV and film production, what plans he has to facilitate the movement of live music and production equipment across the EU.

Caroline Dinenage:

This Government understands that the cultural and creative sectors rely on the ability to move people across borders quickly, simply, and with minimal cost and administration.

Being outside the European Union does not change this. It does, however, mean practical changes on both sides of the Channel that will require understanding and adaptation. UK professionals are of course still able to tour and work in the EU, and vice versa.

Since 1 January 2021, customs processes apply to all movements of commercial and non-commercial goods between Great Britain and the EU. Both parties' include similar legislative provisions on the customs procedures governing the temporary admission of goods, which would include musical instruments and professional equipment and reflects practice set out in relevant international conventions, including the ATA and Istanbul Conventions. Where musicians or other professionals move equipment to the EU temporarily, which means they intend to return this equipment to the UK afterwards, there are several options to avoid payment of import duties in the EU and on return to the UK, including via the use of ATA Carnets and the Temporary Admission procedure.

A carnet is not required for musicians with accompanied instruments or equipment (carried or taken with the individual in personal baggage or a vehicle) travelling between Great Britain and The EU.

The management of EU import and export procedures is the responsibility of the customs authorities of the Member States. It is important that businesses and individuals confirm the processes in advance of their journey.

We are working urgently across government and in collaboration with the music and wider creative industries, including through the touring working group, to help address these issues so that touring in Europe can resume with ease as soon as it is safe to do so.

■ Newspaper Press: Internet

Sarah Owen:

[4711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to include provisions on regulation of the comments sections of online newspaper websites in the Online Safety Bill announced in the Queen's Speech..

Caroline Dineneage:

The comment sections of online newspaper websites will not be in scope of the Online Safety Bill. The Bill was published in draft on 12 May. The draft Bill exempts from its scope comments and reviews on articles, products and services published directly by a company on its own website. This includes 'below the line' comments on news publishers' sites.

Please note that anyone concerned by material published on a news website's comment section can complain directly to the publisher or to the relevant independent self regulator. The majority of traditional publishers - including 95% of national newspapers by circulation - are members of The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). A number of smaller publishers have joined The Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS).

■ Theatre: EU Countries**Giles Watling:**[\[3150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU on the ability of theatre productions that originate in the UK to undertake a continuous multinational tour in Europe.

Caroline Dineneage:

This Government recognises the importance of our world leading creative and cultural industries, including theatre. Touring is a vital part of performers' careers, providing not only a vital income stream, but also enriching opportunities for cultural exchange across the world. Being outside the European Union does not change this. It does, however, mean practical changes on both sides of the Channel that will require understanding and adaptation.

UK performers and artists are of course still able to tour and perform in the EU, and vice versa. However, we understand the concerns about the new arrangements and we are committed to supporting the sectors as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes.

As the Prime Minister has said, we're working flat out with the industry, including through the DCMS-led working group, on plans to support the creative sectors tour in Europe. Through our bilateral discussions with EU Member States, we have established that in at least 17 out of 27 Member States some touring activities are possible without visas or work-permits.

In recognition of the value of the cultural and creative industries - including theatre - at Budget 2021 this government announced an additional £300 million of support in England through the Culture Recovery Fund. This extra funding means that our total support package for culture during the pandemic is now approaching £2 billion. These are unprecedented sums.

EDUCATION

■ Climate Change: Curriculum

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[2470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase the time spent in the curriculum on teaching primary and secondary school pupils about climate change.

Nick Gibb:

The Department believes it important that all children and young people are taught about climate change. All schools in the country are required to follow a broad and balanced curriculum, as exemplified by the National Curriculum which is mandatory in all state-maintained schools. The National Curriculum already includes content which allows for teaching on environmental and sustainability issues such as climate change in both the science and geography curricula from Key Stage 1 onwards. Additionally, in 2017, we introduced a new environmental science A level. This will enable pupils to study topics that will support their understanding of climate change and how it can be tackled.

The Department does not, however, set the amount of time schools spend on teaching topics within the curriculum. Teachers have the flexibility and freedom to determine how they deliver the content in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils and can choose to cover particular subjects or topics in greater depth if they wish.

■ Education: Climate Change

Sarah Olney:

[\[1156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that young people receive teaching on the climate crisis.

Nick Gibb:

It is important that young people are taught about climate change. For this reason, climate change and related topics such as sustainability are included throughout both the science and geography curricula and GCSEs. In primary science and geography, pupils are given a firm foundation for the further study of the environment in secondary school. For example, in primary science, pupils are taught about how environments can change as a result of human actions. They are taught about animals' habitats, including that changes to the environment may pose dangers to living things. In primary geography, pupils are taught about seasonal and daily weather patterns, climate zones and human geography, including land use, economic activity, and the distribution of natural resources.

In secondary science, pupils are taught about the production of carbon dioxide by human activity and the effect this has on the climate. This is expanded on in GCSE science where pupils consider the evidence for additional anthropogenic causes of climate change. In secondary geography, pupils look at how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments and the

climate. As part of GCSE geography, pupils look at the causes, consequences of and responses to extreme weather conditions and natural weather hazards.

In 2017, the Department introduced a new environmental science A level. This will enable students to study topics that will support their understanding of climate change and how it can be tackled. Schools and teachers can go beyond the topics set out in the National Curriculum, or do more in-depth teaching of these topic areas, if they so wish.

■ Further Education: Law

Munira Wilson: [\[2454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will introduce funding opportunities for (a) Graduate Diploma in Law and (b) other further education law courses.

Michelle Donelan:

Graduate Diplomas in Law (GDL) are courses that are generally shorter in duration and/or of a lower intensity than a master's degree. Students on these courses are less likely to face the same financial barriers as those studying a full postgraduate degree and as a result, a GDL does not fall within scope for a postgraduate master's loan. However, if a higher education provider was to include the GDL as part of a course which led to a master's qualification (such as a Master's in Law), then a student would in principle be eligible for the postgraduate loan.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has approved a range of law qualifications across a range of levels for funding for post-16 study. This includes qualifications which are available for 16- to 19-year-olds as well as post 19-year-olds, including through advanced learner loans. These qualifications may include Access to Higher Education Diplomas in Law at level 3, A levels and AS levels in law, as well as other level 3 qualifications in law and legal practice, level 2 qualifications in law and business, level 4 qualifications in law, regulation and ethics and level 5 and 6 qualifications in law.

■ Postgraduate Education: West Yorkshire

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[2487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of graduates entering into postgraduate studies from (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire.

Michelle Donelan:

The postgraduate master's loan scheme was introduced in summer 2016 to help remove the financial barrier often faced by those wishing to step up to achieving a master's level qualification and stimulate take up of postgraduate master's study. The loan is intended as a contribution to the cost of study, rather than to specifically cover tuition fees or livings costs. Entitlement is not means-tested.

Similarly, since 2018 students have been able to apply for a loan to contribute to the costs of postgraduate doctoral study. These loans are available to all eligible students who have gained a place on an eligible programme of study.

The maximum loan amounts for the 2021/22 academic year of £11,570 for master's study and £27,265 for doctoral study are available to all eligible students domiciled in England. Additional support is not provided for individual areas.

■ Schools: Climate Change

Janet Daby:

[2445]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) teaching resources and (b) continuous professional development materials provided by schools on climate change are (i) adequate and (ii) up-to-date.

Nick Gibb:

The National Curriculum already includes content which allows for teaching on environmental and sustainability issues such as climate change in both the science and geography curricula from Key Stage 1 onwards.

As the National Curriculum is a framework setting out the content that the Department expects schools to cover in each subject, teachers have the flexibility and freedom to determine how they deliver the content in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. They can choose to cover particular topics in greater depth if they wish, such as the impact of human actions on the environment. This may be influenced by the latest academic developments on climate change, which teachers can access via resources available from the science and geography learned societies and subject associations.

The Department wants to ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality teaching resources and continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities to ensure pupils have a firm understanding. In order for CPD to be effective, it needs to be tailored to the needs of the individual, their career context and their development needs. As such, decisions related to CPD participation and selection rest with schools, headteachers, and teachers.

The Department has invested in specialist training, including science specific CPD available through the national network of Science Learning Partnerships. We also fund bursaries for science teachers to attend the National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning Centre through Project Enthuse. £4.84 million has also been made available for the Oak National Academy for academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21 to provide a wide range of subject video lessons and teaching resources from Reception up to Year 11 within which topics relating to climate change and the environment are covered.

■ STEM Subjects: West Yorkshire**Imran Ahmad Khan:****[4066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage pupils to study STEM subjects in (a) further and (b) higher education in (i) Wakefield and (ii) West Yorkshire.

Gillian Keegan:

The government is encouraging more students, including those in Wakefield and West Yorkshire, into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and training at all stages from primary school to higher education. Improving take-up of STEM subjects is vital for the UK's future economic needs and to drive up productivity.

To ensure a strong pipeline of qualified students into higher education and careers in STEM areas, the department has committed substantial spending on mathematics, digital and technical education to increase take-up and better teaching of STEM subjects in schools.

We have also introduced T Levels as a high-quality technical alternative to A levels. T Levels in Digital and Construction were launched last year, Health and Science will be taught for the first time from this September, and courses in Engineering and Manufacturing will launch in 2022. In the West Yorkshire area, Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College and Shipley College began teaching the Digital T Level last year. Wakefield College, Calderdale College and Leeds City College plan to deliver T Levels (including Digital, Construction, Health & Science and Education & Childcare) from September this year. A further 3 providers - Kirklees College, Leeds College of Building and Garforth Academy - will start delivering T Levels (including Digital, Construction, Health & Science, Education & Childcare, Business Administration and Engineering & Manufacturing) in 2022.

The government is also funding the creation of up to 20 Institutes of Technology, which will be centres of excellence for technical training. These unique collaborations between further education colleges, universities and businesses offer higher technical education and training (mainly at levels 4 and 5) in key sectors such as digital, construction, advanced manufacturing and engineering.

The government also funds programmes to support STEM and the creation of a more diverse STEM workforce now and in the future, such as the STEM Ambassador programme and the CREST Awards, which focus on increasing engagement in STEM through informal and extra-curricular activities, to support young people's learning, skills and decision-making in pursuing STEM qualifications and careers.

The STEM Ambassadors programme is a nationwide network of over 30,000 volunteers representing over 7,000 employers, who engage with young people to support their interest and knowledge in STEM subjects and to illuminate the broad range of STEM careers through their own experiences. STEM Ambassadors delivered over half a million volunteering hours per year, acting as relatable role

models to illustrate to young people that science, research, engineering and innovation is for 'people like me' (57% of STEM Ambassadors are under 35, 45% are women and 15% are from an ethnic minority background).

Careers information, advice and guidance opens young people's eyes to a range of different career possibilities, such as careers in STEM, and challenge stereotypes as well as helping to prepare young people for the workplace.

We know that supporting schools to deliver STEM-related careers education is important. Secondary schools are expected to provide pupils with at least one meaningful interaction with employers per pupil per year, with a particular focus on STEM employers.

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) launched a STEM toolkit to support Careers Leaders, helping them to build STEM-specific content into their careers strategy. The toolkit can be found here:

<https://www.stem.org.uk/resources/elibrary/resource/467467/stem-careers-toolkit-secondary-schools-and-colleges>.

The CEC has funded encounters between young people and STEM employers since it was established, investing in organisations like Engineering UK, Greenpower Trust and Manufacturing UK.

The CEC is also working with Local Enterprise Partnerships to help Enterprise Coordinators in those areas with the lowest uptake of STEM qualifications to make sure that STEM encounters are built into careers and enterprise plans.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Rachel Hopkins:

[2501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the information that informed the Government's decision on the return of all remaining students to university campuses on 17 May 2021 as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

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 (SARI)-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 (SPI-B) (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>.

■ Students: Greater London

Daisy Cooper: [2451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many respondents to the Office for Students consultation on recurrent funding for 2021-22 (a) supported and (b) opposed the reduction by half to the rate of high-cost subject funding for courses in (i) performing and creative arts, (ii) media studies and (iii) archaeology.

Daisy Cooper: [2452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many respondents to the Office for Students consultation on recurrent funding for 2021-22 (a) supported and (b) opposed the withdrawal of the targeted allocation for students attending courses in London.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[2453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many respondents to the Office for Students consultation on recurrent funding for 2021-22 (a) supported and (b) opposed the removal of London weighting from the student premium allocations.

Michelle Donelan:

We have asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the Strategic Priorities Grant for the 2021-22 financial year. These reforms include the re-allocation of high-cost subject funding towards the provision of high-cost subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost science, technology, mathematics and engineering subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs, as well as the removal of the London Weighting element of the Strategic Priorities Grant.

The OfS has 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.

The OfS is analysing the responses to the consultation and will respond in due course.

■ **Students: Quarantine**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[2450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy that (a) international students at UK universities and (b) foreign language students on placements abroad will not have to pay for the cost of covid-19 hotel quarantine on entering the UK.

Michelle Donelan:

Hotel quarantine is in place to prevent the spread of potentially harmful COVID-19 variants in the UK. There is a need to have strict rules in place to prevent the vaccine effort from being undermined. As is the case for any international arrival, the costs of quarantine are borne by the traveller, and the costs are the same for any individual arriving in the UK from (or via) a red list country.

However, the department's officials have worked closely with the higher education (HE) sector and colleagues across the government to ensure that UK residents who are facing significant financial hardship (including international students, due to their visa status) will have the opportunity to apply for a deferred repayment plan when booking their managed quarantine hotel room. Travellers who are eligible will be referred to a government debt collection agency ("Qualco"), who will perform an independent financial assessment and determine an appropriate payment plan. Information on the deferred repayment plan can be found on GOV.UK.

In addition, students experiencing financial hardship should speak to their HE provider about the support available. The government has made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to HE providers in the 2020/21 academic year. This is in addition to the £256 million of government-funded student premium funding already available to HE providers to draw on for the 2021/21 academic year.

This support can be used to help all students, including postgraduates and international students, who can be confident in expressing concerns about hardship to their provider without any impact on their immigration status.

■ **Swimming: Children**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[3109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he is taking steps to ensure that children who have missed out on swimming lessons as a result of school and leisure centre closures are able to learn about water safety.

Nick Gibb:

Water safety is a vital life skill, which is why it is a mandatory part of the curriculum for Physical Education at primary school. The Department has worked with Oak National Academy and swimming and water safety organisations to make virtual lessons on water safety available to all schools.

The Department is also working with the Royal Life Saving Society UK to continue to support the Drowning Prevention Week in June 2021 in order for as many schools as possible to have access to these water safety resources.

■ **Universities: Sexual Harassment**

Catherine West:

[4649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the levels of sexual harassment and assault at universities; and what steps he is taking to tackle that matter.

Michelle Donelan:

Any form of harassment, violence or sexual assault is abhorrent and unacceptable anywhere in society, including in our universities which should be safe and inclusive environments. The government urges university leaders to ensure a zero-tolerance approach to all harassment and sexual misconduct and improve the systems for reporting incidents.

Higher education (HE) providers have clear responsibilities, including under the Equality Act 2010, and should have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, and to investigate and swiftly address reports of sexual misconduct. Any student who feels that their complaint has not been dealt with appropriately or satisfactorily can escalate their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Students also can and should inform the police if they believe the law has been broken. The government expects providers to support students in making a decision about the way forward, including whether to make a report to the police.

It is important that providers break down barriers to reporting and that students feel safe and able to report incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The government urges HE providers to collect comprehensive accurate data on

harassment incidents, and continue to break down barriers to reporting, in spite of the potential for this to lead to initial spikes in reported instances.

The Office for Students (OfS) statement of expectations on harassment and sexual misconduct was published on 19 April 2021 and is a useful tool for providers, who should ensure their policies and processes reflect the expectations set out within the statement. As part of its next steps on harassment and hate crime, the OfS has indicated that it will consider options for connecting the statement of expectations to its conditions of registration.

The government has been working with and through the OfS and Universities UK (UUK) in recent years to improve the way the HE sector tackles sexual harassment and misconduct in HE. The department holds regular meetings with UUK and the OfS specifically on matters of sexual harassment and misconduct in HE, including in relation to progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the UUK 2016 Changing the Culture Framework. This framework was published by the UUK Harassment and Hate Crime Taskforce, which was set up in September 2015 at the government's request.

Since 2016, a total investment of £4.7 million, match funded by HE providers, has been invested by the OfS and its predecessor, funding 119 safeguarding projects. £2.45 million of this was given to 63 projects specifically focused on tackling sexual and gender-based violence in higher education.

Despite these efforts, evidence (including testimonials on the Everyone's Invited website) demonstrates that a significant change is still needed. The government is deeply concerned to see the disturbing testimonies which reference experiences within HE settings. The government will continue to work closely with the sector and its regulator, the OfS, to ensure students feel safe within HE providers, and that providers have robust policies and procedures in place to address incidents.

The government remains committed to working with the sector to prevent and tackle sexual harassment and assault.

■ Visas: Married People

Marsha De Cordova:

[2441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of giving people on a spousal dependent visa access to student finance.

Michelle Donelan:

Generally, to be eligible for student support, a student must be resident in England and have 'settled' status or a recognised connection with the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course and must have been a resident of the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years prior to that date.

It is important that the limited public funds available for student support are targeted on those categories of persons with a lawful and substantial residential connection to the UK and who are likely to remain indefinitely. The only exceptions to the

requirement to be settled are where an individual has been granted international protection (such as refugee status) or where they fall within certain exceptions within the relevant regulations.

There are no plans to enable persons with limited leave to remain on a family visa, including for spouses, to access student finance prior to achieving settlement.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Products: Imports

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[2416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in the number of hunting trophies entering the UK in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

In 2019, the UK recorded 63 imports of hunting trophies from species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The UK recorded 33 imports in 2018, 69 in 2017, and 143 in 2016. Defra has not made an assessment of the reasons for this increase in 2019 but imports fluctuate year-on-year for many reasons including fluctuations in the number of animals hunted, and how hunting trophies are recorded and counted on permits.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[2417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government's proposals to ban imports and exports of hunting trophies will include an exemption allowing hunters to import their trophies of animals in the event that they pay a fee.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the conservation of endangered species in the UK and internationally very seriously, which is why we will be banning the import of hunting trophies from endangered species. Our approach will be comprehensive, robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide. We will be setting out plans soon.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff

Alicia Kearns: [\[1428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to meet the UK Government's commitment to moving 22,000 civil servants outside of central London by 2030, and in particular to the East Midlands.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is committed to playing its part in the levelling up agenda and strengthening the Union through a growing presence across the UK. The Department is already geographically dispersed, with over three-quarters of Defra civil servants based

outside London, including in our policy hubs in York and Bristol, and 85% of all staff in Defra Group including arms-length bodies. The Department will play its part in the Government's commitment to move 22,000 civil servant posts outside London by 2030, and base half of all senior civil servant posts outside London by 2030.

In the East Midlands, Defra has 880 staff. We are committed to joining the new Government hub in Peterborough from next year

■ Fisheries: Seasonal Workers

Claire Hanna: [\[4738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 1405, what estimate his Department has made of the number of seasonal workers employed annually within fish processing in (a) UK ports in total, (b) Ardglass and (c) Kilkeel ports.

Claire Hanna: [\[4739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the new immigration rules on the fish processing sector in the UK.

Claire Hanna: [\[4740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 1407, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending immigration exemptions for seasonal workers within fish processing.

Victoria Prentis:

A 2018 Seafish survey found that seasonal workers accounted for 15% of all jobs sampled in UK fish processing. This survey found that in Kilkeel, seasonal workers accounted for 1% of all jobs sampled whilst data for Ardglass is not available. The new immigration rules were introduced on 1 January 2021 during the global pandemic and we do not believe their impact on the fish processing sector can be accurately measured at this time. Given the uncertain future that many resident workers in the UK are facing due to Covid19, the growing number of applications for the EU Settled status scheme, and the comparatively lower numbers of seasonal workers in fishing compared to other industries, this is not the appropriate time for an assessment. EU nationals who have settled status can continue to travel to the UK to undertake seasonal work during 2021.

■ Fisheries: Sustainable Development

Chris Elmore: [\[2391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase the sustainability of fisheries.

Victoria Prentis:

The Fisheries Act's objectives, together with the strong legal framework of the Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Management Plans, set out our commitment to

achieving sustainable fishing and protecting the marine environment. We will also work closely with neighbouring countries to ensure our seas are managed sustainably, to secure a fair share of quota for UK fishers, and to enable a thriving industry for current and future generations. Our ambition remains to have world-class fisheries management that delivers sustainable fisheries, safeguards stocks and the environment for the long-term.

■ **Flood Control**

Bill Esterson:

[\[4583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the feedback given to each organisation that submitted an expressions of interest to the flood and coastal resilience innovation programme.

Rebecca Pow:

All organisations who submitted expressions of interest to the flood and coastal resilience innovation programme have been offered feedback. Where requested, the Environment Agency has, or will, provide detailed feedback from the assessment process, providing learning opportunities for the lead applicant and their partners. The Environment Agency is continuing to work with all projects that did not secure funding via this programme to help them identify potential alternative opportunities to take their good ideas forward.

■ **Flood Control: Sefton**

Bill Esterson:

[\[4582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to meet the hon. Member for Sefton Central to discuss flood protection measures for the town of Maghull in the borough of Sefton; and for what reason previous meetings on that topic that were scheduled to take place between the hon. Member for Taunton Deane and the hon. Member for Sefton Central on (a) 25 March 2021, (b) 26 April 2021 and (c) 20 May 2021 were cancelled.

Rebecca Pow:

The meetings scheduled with me in March and April were rearranged due to Parliamentary business. The meeting on the 20 May was cancelled due to an unforeseen circumstance.

My office will be in touch soon to re-schedule this meeting as soon as possible.

■ **Natural Resources: Consumption**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[2497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce resource consumption in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Our plans for reducing resource consumption and preventing waste in England are set out in our draft Waste Prevention Programme for England - Towards a Resource Efficient Economy, which is currently out for consultation. This builds on the measures set out in the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy and includes designing products which last longer and that can be reused, repaired or remanufactured, coupled with supporting systems and business models to keep goods and materials in circulation for longer.

As part of this we are exploring ways to help consumers and producers make more sustainable decisions for instance through information and labelling, incentives such as the carrier bag charge, introducing producer responsibility schemes, and looking at how government and local authorities can support reuse and repair as well as alternative models such as renting and sharing.

The devolved administrations are aware of our consultation on a new Waste Prevention Programme, and the policy proposals it contains are being discussed at official level.

■ Recycling

Peter Dowd: [\[2318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there is a difference in the operating costs of a deposit return scheme depending on whether there is a (a) variable rate deposit and (b) flat rate deposit.

Peter Dowd: [\[2319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the planned deposit return scheme, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of a flat rate deposit on the levels of product wastage.

Peter Dowd: [\[2320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the planned deposit return scheme, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of a flat rate deposit on portion sizes.

Peter Dowd: [\[2321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the planned deposit return scheme, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of a variable rate deposit on return rates.

Peter Dowd: [\[2322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the effect of a (a) variable rate deposit and (b) flat rate deposit on the revenue received from a deposit return scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's second consultation on introducing a deposit return scheme (DRS), which is currently live, sets out the intention for the scheme to be managed by an organisation called the Deposit Management Organisation (DMO). We propose that the DMO would have the ability to decide on the type of deposit for the scheme (flat or variable rate) and to set the deposit amount at the level they deem suitable for achieving the objectives of the scheme, subject to parameters set out by Government in legislation. For this reason, we have not conducted specific analysis on all possible scenarios the deposit may be set at, but our current Impact Assessment (published alongside the second consultation) assumes a flat rate 20p deposit is placed on all in-scope drinks containers and offers analysis of how the deposit level can influence return rates.

The operating costs and revenue of a DRS could be impacted by the deposit rate chosen by the DMO, which will be somewhat dependent on the extent to which unredeemed deposits are used to fund the scheme. We are seeking views in the second consultation on how unredeemed deposits should be used to fund the DRS. The department do not foresee significant administrative / operational costs to the scheme as a result of having either a flat or variable rate deposit.

No specific assessment has been made by Government on the potential effect of a variable rate deposit on return rates of in-scope containers, on product wastage, or on portion sizes, but we continue to engage with industry and consider any relevant research which should be factored into our overall design and analysis of the scheme. In any case, we propose to place a 90% collection rate target on the DMO, and the approach to setting the deposit level chosen by the DMO should reflect their obligation to achieve this target.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[2404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the UK and US Administrations' decision to withdraw armed forces from Afghanistan on the (a) governance and stability of Afghanistan and (b) UK's geo-strategic interests.

Nigel Adams:

The withdrawal of its armed forces from Afghanistan was a decision made collectively by NATO Allies and partners. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) have led in defending the security of Afghanistan since 2014. The UK, with the US and NATO Allies, will continue to provide assistance to the ANDSF as they increase their capabilities. The UK has worked with the Afghan authorities to strengthen state institutions for governance, rule of law and human rights.

The UK remains committed to supporting Afghanistan on its path to a more peaceful and positive future. Only a negotiated and inclusive settlement will bring sustainable peace. The UK has offered strong diplomatic and military engagement to support efforts to build a sustainable peace process. We continue to make clear to all sides that any political settlement must protect the progress made in the country, including the protection of rights for women and minority groups.

■ **Bangladesh: Religious Freedom**

Bob Blackman:

[2266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the recent increase in attacks against Hindu people and temples in Bangladesh; and what recent steps his Department has taken to support freedom of religion or belief 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.

We are concerned at the recent attacks against Hindu sites in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a human rights priority country for the FCDO, and 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.

■ **Colombia: Human Rights**

Fabian Hamilton:

[4526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps are being taken to ensure Colombian police units receiving UK police training are not involved in human rights abuses.

Fabian Hamilton:

[4527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what Colombian police units are receiving training from UK personnel; and what assessment he has made of whether (a) those units or (b) personnel have been involved in alleged human rights abuses during recent protests in that country.

Wendy Morton:

We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully. We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully the excessive use of force against protesters, and take appropriate action against those responsible. Security services must be held accountable for their actions, with all complaints thoroughly

investigated. The UK is a key supporter of the implementation of Colombia's historic peace agreement. Over the past five years, the UK has provided £63 million through the Conflict, Security, and Stability Fund (CSSF), which has allowed us to provide niche technical and financial support on stabilisation, peacebuilding, and transitional justice.

Our Embassy regularly reviews Overseas Security and Justice Assessments, ensuring steps are taken to mitigate any risk human rights abuses, and strengthen the impact of our interventions on improving respect for human rights. HMG work on security and justice overseas is based on British values, including human rights and democracy.

■ Colombia: Police Brutality

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[4571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Colombian counterparts on ensuring the full investigation into the numerous reports of eye injuries caused by projectiles fired by police during recent protests in that country.

Wendy Morton:

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully, and that the right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed.

Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we have raised our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia since protests began. Most recently, I spoke with acting Foreign Minister Adriana Mejía on 14 May to express my concerns, and welcome Colombia's commitment to transparent investigations into allegations of abuse. We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully any reports on excessive use of force against protestors, and take appropriate action against those responsible. Security services must be held accountable for their actions, and any complaints thoroughly investigated.

Chris Stephens:

[\[4626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reported multiple human rights abuses committed by the Colombian police during recent protests in that country.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government remains concerned about reports of human rights violations in Colombia. The fundamental human right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed. Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we have raised our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia since protests began. Most recently, I spoke with acting Foreign Minister Adriana Mejía on 14 May to express our concerns, and welcome Colombia's commitment to transparent investigations into allegations of abuse.

We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully any excessive use of force, and take appropriate action against those responsible. Security services must be held accountable for their actions, with all complaints thoroughly investigated. We will continue to work closely with the UN Verification Mission, and the UN Office of the High Representative for Human Rights in Colombia, as well as the wider international community, in support of their efforts to reduce tensions, and promote dialogue.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[4663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports from the United Nations Human Rights Office of excessive force being used by the Colombian National Police against protesters.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government remains concerned about reports of human rights violations in Colombia. The fundamental human right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed. Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country' and we have raised our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia since protests began. Most recently, I spoke with acting Foreign Minister Adriana Mejía on 14 May to express our concerns, and welcome Colombia's commitment to transparent investigations into allegations of abuse.

We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully any excessive use of force, and take appropriate action against those responsible. Security services must be held accountable for their actions, with all complaints thoroughly investigated. We will continue to work closely with the UN Verification Mission, and the UN Office of the High Representative for Human Rights in Colombia, as well as the wider international community, in support of their efforts to reduce tensions, and promote dialogue.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[4664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has plans to review arms export licences issued for Colombia in response to the reported human rights abuses committed by Colombian police during protests in April and May 2021.

Wendy Morton:

HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We consider all our export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Kate Osborne:

[\[4713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on reports of eye injuries resulting from the actions of Colombian police during protests.

Wendy Morton:

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully, and that the right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed.

Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we have raised our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia since protests began. Most recently, I spoke with acting Foreign Minister Adriana Mejía on 14 May to express my concerns, and welcome Colombia's commitment to transparent investigations into allegations of abuse. We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully any reports on excessive use of force against protestors, and take appropriate action against those responsible. Security services must be held accountable for their actions, and any complaints thoroughly investigated.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[4617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of global equitable access to covid-19 vaccines on the emergence of viral variants of covid-19.

Wendy Morton:

All viruses change constantly through mutation, and many thousands of variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been detected across the world. Most have little to no impact on the virus's ability to cause infections and disease, but some can pose higher risks. Variants are more likely to arise in areas of high transmission. In addition to basic public health measures, the World Health Organisation has advised that ensuring equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines will reduce virus circulation. This will ultimately lead to fewer mutations and variants.

The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are among the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), committing £548 million, which leveraged \$1 billion from other donors in 2020 through match funding. This support to COVAX has been critical to it supplying COVID-19 vaccines to over 120 countries, and economies. We have also committed to share the majority of our supply of any surplus vaccine doses with COVAX.

Dr Philippa Whitford:[\[4619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many covid-19 vaccine doses the UK has shared through the COVAX facility in 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, and the Prime Minister has said that we will share the majority of any doses that are surplus to UK needs with COVAX. As the multilateral mechanism set up to support international cooperation on vaccines, COVAX remains best-placed for allocating vaccines where they are most needed, and will be most effective. We have already

committed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, which specifically supports vaccine access for at least 500 million people in up to 92 low and middle income countries in 2021. Our wider support for COVAX has enabled the mechanism to reach over 120 countries.

■ **Cyprus: Politics and Government**

Mark Pritchard:

[3822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Government's position is on the Cyprus issue; and if he will publish the outputs of his recent visit to Northern Cyprus.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to supporting the UN process to reach a Cyprus Settlement. On 27-29 April, in support of the efforts led by the UN Secretary General to find common ground on a way forward to resolve the Cyprus Issue, the Foreign Secretary represented the UK as a Guarantor Power at informal UN talks in Geneva.

At the meeting, the Foreign Secretary continued to urge all sides to demonstrate flexibility and compromise to find a solution to the Cyprus Issue within the UN Security Council parameters. This followed UK engagement with the parties ahead of the talks, including the Foreign Secretary's visit to the island on 4 February where he met President Anastasiades, Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and the UN. Ahead of the talks, during my visit to Cyprus (7-9 April), I reiterated this message and the UK's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue.

■ **Democratic Republic of Congo: Humanitarian Aid**

Paul Girvan:

[2398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government has to increase humanitarian aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo to combat the ongoing hunger crisis in that country.

James Duddridge:

As one of the largest bilateral donors to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), we are providing life-saving assistance to 3 million people. The UK is also leading a global call to action on the risk of famine. Through our Presidency, the UK has recently secured the G7's first ever Compact to tackle the drivers of famine - helping protect over 34 million people at imminent risk and address the upward trend in people needing humanitarian aid, including in DRC.

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid to 0.5% of GNI. As a result, UK humanitarian aid to DRC will not increase. We will remain a world-leading Official Development Assistance donor and still spend more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty, tackle climate change and improve global health.

■ Gaza: Reconstruction

Sarah Champion:

[\[4610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism; and whether the UK Government provides funding for that mechanism.

James Cleverly:

The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM), is a temporary mechanism to allow the entry into Gaza of large amounts of materials considered by Israel to have 'dual-use' civil and military capacity. We consider the GRM has been successful in facilitating reconstruction since the last conflict in 2014. As of 31 March 2021, 9,887 out of 11,000 totally damaged houses had been rebuilt, as well as over 88,000 homes with major or minor damage, indicating reconstruction of homes was in its final stage. In the long term, a more comprehensive lifting of restrictions as part of a political agreement is the only solution.

Since the establishment of the GRM in October 2014, the UK has provided a total of £2.5m in funding. The UK will continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

■ Global Partnership for Education: Finance

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[4659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is his policy for the UK to retain its position as the leading bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education at the upcoming Global Education Summit.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[4660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to announce the UK's allocation of funding to the replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister and President Kenyatta of Kenya will co-host the Global Education Summit: Financing the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in London in July 2021. As co-hosts, it is our policy to use all the means at our disposal to host a successful Summit. A well-funded GPE is central to delivering the two ambitious global objectives endorsed by G7 Foreign and Development Ministers in London on 5 May - getting 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 in the next 5 years.

As the Foreign Secretary has previously confirmed, we plan to increase our next contribution to GPE, details of which will be announced in due course.

■ Iran: Detainees

Lisa Nandy:

[4590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of granting diplomatic protection to (a) Anoosheh Ashoori and (b) other dual British nationals detained in Iran.

James Cleverly:

We remain committed to securing the immediate and permanent release of Anoosheh Ashoori and other arbitrarily detained dual British nationals in Iran. Their welfare remains a top priority. Our Embassy in Tehran continues to request consular access to Mr Ashoori and we have been supporting his family since being made aware of his detention. We have recently received Mr Ashoori's diplomatic protection application and officials are currently reviewing the extensive documentation.

The Foreign Secretary continues to raise the UK's concerns about Iran's practice of detaining foreign and dual nationals with Foreign Minister Zarif, most recently on 3 April, and the Prime Minister has raised the issue with President Rouhani on 10 March.

Lisa Nandy:

[4591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with international counterparts who have had success in securing the release of dual nationals detained in Iran; and what steps he is taking to apply the findings of those discussions to his efforts to secure the release of dual British nationals detained in Iran.

James Cleverly:

We are in contact with a range of international partners who share our deep concerns about the ongoing detention of arbitrarily detained dual British nationals in Iran. We remain committed to securing their immediate and permanent release, so that they can be reunited with their loved ones. We continue to raise their cases at the most senior levels, and discuss them at every opportunity with our Iranian counterparts. Our Ambassador in Tehran regularly raises our dual national detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

■ Iran: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones:

[2446]

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

James Cleverly:

We regularly assess the political situation in Iran, including through our British Embassy in Tehran. We also closely follow key events, such as the upcoming Presidential elections.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Rachael Maskell:**[\[2370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with faith communities in the UK on the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary discussed the ongoing violence with the Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, on 19 May. The Foreign Secretary stressed the need for an immediate end to violence, and peaceful coexistence between Arab and Jewish communities. As the Communities Secretary has said, "Whatever your view of the conflict in Israel and Gaza, there is no justification for inciting anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim hatred."

■ Mehran Raoof**Lisa Nandy:**[\[4592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will ensure that UK officials attend any future trial hearings related to the detained British dual national Mehran Raoof in Iran.

James Cleverly:

We are supporting the family of Mehran Raoof and remain in close contact with them to discuss the support we provide to Mr Raoof. We will continue to request access to hearings for dual British nationals where the family wishes us to do so, however Iran routinely denies us access to such hearings because they view British dual nationals as solely Iranian.

■ Members: Correspondence**Jeff Smith:**[\[2344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Withington of 30 March 2021 on British citizens currently detained in Syria, reference JS41774.

James Cleverly:

We have no record of receiving this item of correspondence. My officials have contacted your office and have obtained a copy. We will work to expedite a response.

Tony Lloyd:[\[2889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 5 March 2021 from the hon. Member for Rochdale on the Counter-Daesh Update.

James Cleverly:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 21 May.

■ Overseas Aid

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[2256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on what date his Department plans to publish country budgets.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO will publish 2021/22 financial budgets in our Annual Report and Accounts, which are due to be published later this year.

■ Overseas Aid: Cost Effectiveness

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[4661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the exacerbation of value for money risks set out in the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's rapid review report entitled Management of the 0.7 per cent ODA spending target in 2020, which Ministers attended each of the four meetings to review, revise and approve proposals; and how long each of those meetings lasted.

Nigel Adams:

All departments subject to the ODA prioritisation exercise were represented at ministerial level in the review meetings. This included the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (as was at the time), Department for International Development (as was at the time) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Department for Health and Social Care, Department for International Trade, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Home Office, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, Ministry of Defence and the Cabinet Office (under the Paymaster General for the Cross Government Funds).

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[4662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's rapid review entitled Management of the 0.7 per cent ODA spending target in 2020, if he will publish the judgment for the value for money assessments listed as one of the criteria for consideration at Star Chambers.

Nigel Adams:

Each Department was responsible for their own value for money assessment against their suggested reductions. These assessments as well as the overall strategy of reducing value for money risk by focussing on stopping new spending and delaying multilateral spending informed the decisions.

■ Overseas Aid: Science

Chris Elmore:

[\[2389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Government's Chief Scientific Advisers on the potential

effect of the reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget on the UK's scientific activities and collaborations at an international level.

James Duddridge:

Government Chief Scientific Advisers play an important role in providing Ministers with advice on the breadth of science and technology policy. ODA research and development is an important part of UK's official development assistance, delivering benefit to hundreds of millions of people. The Government Chief Scientific Advisers were closely involved in providing advice to the government on this issue, drawing on their individual expertise and wider networks.

This advice has informed the government's commitment to invest in ODA science and technology as a substantial force for good to tackle major challenges, develop international partnerships and deliver development impact.

■ **Tigray: Genocide**

Jim Shannon:

[\[2988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the reports of the Ethiopian military's involvement in the massacre in Tigray.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned at human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia's Tigray region. There are shocking reports of extra judicial killings committed by parties to the conflict, including the ENDF at Mabhere Diego on or around 15 January. The Government of Ethiopia has committed to hold perpetrators of human rights violations to account, but we have yet to see any meaningful action to do so and are troubled that the reports of atrocities continue at pace. The UK will support the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigations into atrocities in Tigray with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission are independent, transparent and impartial and that those responsible for these human rights violations and abuses are held to account.

■ **Tunisia: Coronavirus**

Damien Moore:

[\[R\]](#) [\[3144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Tunisian counterpart on the covid-19 restrictions on travel between the two countries.

James Cleverly:

On 17 May the Government lifted the legal restrictions on international travel, but strict rules on testing and quarantine will remain in place to protect public health and our vaccination programme. The British Embassy in Tunis is in regular contact with the Tunisian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health and Tourism on the issue of Covid-19 restrictions and travel between the two countries.

■ UNAIDS

Jim Shannon:

[\[2983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the FCDO Strategic Priority on global health security, what assessment he has made on the effectiveness of UNAIDS in ensuring a whole of society approach to ending AIDS by 2030.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to addressing HIV and AIDS through our commitments to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and malaria and our work in 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.

Jim Shannon:

[\[2984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the FCDO Strategic Priority on science, research and technology, what assessment he has the effectiveness of UNAIDS in delivering the benefits of scientific advances to people living with HIV.

Wendy Morton:

The UK provides funding to UNAIDS to support its leadership role in the HIV response. Through our programme partnership agreement, the UK assesses the work of UNAIDS against agreed indicators including furthering innovation in the response. The new Global AIDS strategy 2021-2016 clearly articulates the importance of leveraging the potential of data, science, research and innovation to guide the HIV response.

■ UNAIDS: Finance

Jim Shannon:

[\[2982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has of the proposed reduction in UK funding to UNAIDS on the ability of the international community to achieve the targets in the UNAIDS Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to addressing HIV and AIDS through our commitments to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and malaria and our work in 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.

Jim Shannon:

[\[2985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of potential effect of the proposed funding cuts to UNAIDS on its (a) engagement and (b) influence at June's UN High Level Meeting on HIV & Aids.

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 will remain a major investor in the global health institutions and continue to support stronger health systems worldwide.

The UK's aid budget has been allocated in accordance with our key strategic priorities, 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. In the meantime, let me reassure you that the UK remains a proud partner to UNAIDS and looks forward to a successful High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS in June that will reinvigorate the global response and galvanise commitment to delivering the new Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026.

■ Western Sahara: Demonstrations**Alan Brown:****[3038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Moroccan authorities on the response of the Moroccan police in Western Sahara to the non-violent protests organised by the family of Sultana Khaya.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports concerning Sultana Khaya and continue to monitor the case. Support for human rights and human rights defenders is a UK priority around the world, and we continue to raise human rights issues with the Moroccan Government accordingly.

■ Western Sahara: Politics and Government**Alan Brown:****[3039]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is his Department's policy that the status of Western Sahara is a non-self-governing territory, in accordance with the UN determination.

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: www.gov.uk/government/news/israel-and-morocco-uk-responds-to-announcement-of-normalisation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Kate Osamor:**[\[379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to support British citizens and residents returning from red list travel ban countries who are unable to meet the costs of mandatory hotel quarantine and who are not in receipt on income-related benefits.

Jo Churchill:

For those facing significant financial hardship as a result of the managed quarantine charge, there is an opportunity to apply for a deferred repayment plan when booking. We have updated the guidance on GOV.UK as it previously referred only to those on income-related benefits.

■ **Abortion: Drugs****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[3081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women.

Helen Whately:

The Government committed to undertake a public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. The consultation has now closed and we are carefully considering all of the responses received, and plan to publish our response later this year. The temporary measure will be kept in place until the response is published.

■ **Accident and Emergency Departments****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[4575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of emergency care demand on tackling the elective procedures backlog.

Edward Argar:

There are no current plans to make an official assessment.

■ **Cancer: Staff****Christian Wakeford:**[\[3218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of the annual NHS cancer budget is allocated to the provision of training and development for the cancer workforce.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Alex Norris:

[\[4687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS healthcare professionals have undertaken training to qualify as a Non-Medical Practitioner in Oncology in England in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

Alex Norris:

[\[4688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding and training opportunities are available in England to support healthcare professionals seeking to pursue non-medical practitioner qualifications in Oncology.

Jo Churchill:

There are a number of clinicians who make up a multi-professional team within oncology. This includes nurses, therapeutic radiographers, healthcare scientists such as medical physicists, pharmacists, speech and language therapists and dieticians. Health Education England supports the education and training of these clinicians through clinical placements and the promotion of priority professions and routes into training. Where courses are eligible, prospective students can access funding through the Student Loans Company for their tuition fees and maintenance loan to support their studies whilst at university. In addition, for a range of courses a non-repayable grant of up to £8,000 per year is available with all students receiving a minimum of £5,000.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

Damien Moore:

[\[1197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to introduce smear tests on demand for people who request that test via their GP.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: There are currently no plans to introduce smear tests on demand. The NHS Cervical Screening Programme offers regular, routine tests for the human papillomavirus which can cause cervical cancer, to all women between the ages of 25 and 64 years old. This programme is intended for women without any symptoms to help detect cervical abnormalities at an early stage.

■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Autism and Learning Disability

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[3149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) prevent people with learning disabilities and autism being inappropriately detained under the Mental Health Act 2007 and (b) ensure that adequate support is available in the community for people with learning disabilities and autism.

Helen Whately:

In the Reforming the Mental Health Act White Paper we set out proposals to limit the scope to detain people with a learning disability or autistic people under the Act. Autism or a learning disability would not be considered mental disorders warranting compulsory treatment.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits increased investment in intensive, crisis and forensic community support for people with a learning disability and autistic people which will enable more people to receive personalised care in the community, closer to home and reduce preventable admissions to inpatient services.

Coronavirus**Sir Desmond Swayne:****[1265]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish statistics on the (a) number of infections, (b) deaths and (c) hospital admissions by each covid-19 variant of concern.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: Public Health England's statistics for infections for each variant of concern are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-variants-genomically-confirmed-case-numbers/variants-distribution-of-cases-data>

Data for hospitalisations and deaths is not currently available in the format requested.

Coronavirus: Disease Control**Paul Bristow:****[497]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice given by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' Environmental and Modelling Group was used by his Department when it made the decision to fund a project led by the Universities of St Andrews and Dundee on whether ultraviolet-C light can kill viruses which cause covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' Environmental and Modelling Group's (SAGE-EMG) advice highlighted the potential for far-UVC technology as promising but requiring further research.

The Universities of St Andrews and Dundee presented far-UVC technology to a workshop convened by the Innovation and Partnerships team in NHS Test and Trace. The workshop evaluation considered several technologies and based on the evidence presented and SAGE-EMG's advice to further the research, far-UVC technology was considered suitable for funding.

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date the paper entitled Insights on transmission of COVID-19 with a focus on the hospitality, retail and leisure sector, by the EMG Transmission Group, published on 30 April 2021, was received by (a) officials and (b) Ministers in his Department.

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking in response to the paper entitled, Insights on transmission of COVID-19 with a focus on the hospitality, retail and leisure sector by the EMG Transmission Group, published on 30 April 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will use the findings of the paper, Insights on transmission of COVID-19 with a focus on the hospitality, retail and leisure sector, by the EMG Transmission Group, to review the Covid-19 Response – Spring 2021 Roadmap; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [692]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the paper, Insights on transmission of COVID-19 with a focus on the hospitality, retail and leisure sector, by the EMG Transmission Group, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the closure of indoor hospitality and leisure on the prevalence of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: The Emergency Modelling Group Transmission Group's paper as discussed by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) on 8 April and received by Departmental officials that day. The minutes of that meeting summarised SAGE's position in relation to the paper and provided advice to the Department. The minutes are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emg-transmission-group-insights-on-transmission-of-covid-19-with-a-focus-on-the-hospitality-retail-and-leisure-sector-8-april-2021>

The closure of indoor venues has had an effect in suppressing the pandemic. Infection rates, hospital admissions and cases of severe illness currently remain in line with modelling provided by scientific experts. The Government keeps the restrictions under continual review.

■ Coronavirus: Misinformation

Carol Monaghan: [2340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to tackle covid-19 vaccine misinformation among African communities in the UK by providing accurate information in (a) Tigrinya, (b) Amharic, (c) Blen, (d) Kibajuni, (e) KiSwahili, (f)

Tigre, (g) Oromo, (h) Afar, (i) Sidayama, (j) Wolayatta, (k) Hausa, (l) Chichewa and (m) Igbo.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's Community Champions scheme works with trusted local leaders to advise local communities about the vaccine and support local communities. The Government's vaccination programme includes the use of street ambassadors to provide advice and information to local communities. The teams include ambassadors who can speak KiSwahili, Oromo, Afar, Yoruba, Akan and Somali.

■ **Coronavirus: Research**

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[4615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to implement a long-term study of immune responses in individuals vaccinated against covid-19.

Edward Argar:

The Department is funding several studies of immune responses to COVID-19 including the SARS-CoV-2 Immunity and Reinfection Evaluation (SIREN) study in health care workers; the Vivaldi study in care home residents and workers; and the COVID-19 Infection Survey led by the Office for National Statistics of repeat household visits looking at those who have antibodies to COVID-19, either from vaccination or previous infection.

The National Institute for Health Research's Health Protection Research Unit in Respiratory Infections is also looking at the size and longevity of the immune response and Public Health England is monitoring antibody levels in individuals who have received either the Pfizer or Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[4618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the Government's Vaccine Strategy.

Nadhim Zahawi:

England's national vaccine strategy is being refreshed to include new developments from the COVID-19 vaccine programme and the extended National Health Service flu programme. The vaccine strategy will be published in due course.

■ **Coronavirus: York**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[1116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the number of covid-19 tests sent for full genome sequencing in York in the context of the Indian variant being detected in that city.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: The proportion of all COVID-19 tests sent for full genome sequencing has been increased across the country, including York. There is currently sufficient capacity to process all samples for which genome sequencing is possible.

■ Dementia: Coronavirus**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[1348]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to (a) undertaking and (b) publishing a review of the prescription of anti-psychotic drugs to people with dementia during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The Department has no plans to conduct a review.

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the monthly data published by NHS Digital on the prescribing of anti-psychotic medication for people diagnosed with dementia and continue to have regular conversations with regional clinical network leads and local services to understand the patterns in prescribing and potential reasons for those trends.

In addition, Public Health England has recently published factsheets which will help to provide context around prescribing activity and support initiation of conversations at a local level to facilitate an understanding of the patterns in prescribing. These factsheets are available at the following link:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/dementia/data#page/>

■ Dementia: Drugs**Elliot Colburn:****[3173]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of prescription of anti-psychotic medication in the care of people with dementia.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the monthly data published by NHS Digital on the prescribing of anti-psychotic medication for people diagnosed with dementia. They have regular conversations with regional clinical network leads and local services to understand the patterns in prescribing and potential reasons for these trends.

■ Dementia: Research**Richard Fuller:****[2942]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department allocated to dementia research in the 2020-21 financial year; how much funding he plans

to allocate to such research in the 2021-22 financial year; and what steps he is taking to increase funding allocated to such research.

Helen Whately:

The Department funds research on health and social care through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The usual practice of the NIHR is not to ring-fence funds for expenditure on particular topics. The NIHR welcomes research into any aspect of human health, including dementia. In 2018/19, the most recent year for which complete data is available, the NIHR's total spend was £31.6 million. Total Government spend was £82.9 million. We are looking at ways to boost further research into dementia and to enable spending to increase significantly over the current Parliament. In March 2021, the NIHR launched a highlight notice on dementia which invited proposals for research, including meeting the needs of underserved communities.

■ **Dental Services: Contracts**

Alex Norris:

[\[3122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what number and proportion of NHS General Dental Services contract holders in England delivered less than 45% of their contracted activity in the last quarter of 2020-21 financial year.

Alex Norris:

[\[3123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what number and proportion of NHS General Dental Services contract holders in England delivered less than 36% of their contracted activity in the last quarter of 2020/2021 financial year.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: Finalised data on the delivery of contracted activity in the last quarter of the 2020-21 financial year is not yet available.

■ **Dentistry**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[4630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a dental school at the University of York which has a medical school based with the University of Hull.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no such assessment.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Staff**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[2408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff from his Department work in the quarantine Exemptions team as of 1 April 2021; and what the average number of staff working on shift within the Exemptions team is at (a) 6.00AM, (b) 12.00PM, (c) 6.00PM and (d) 12.00AM.

Jo Churchill:

The Managed Quarantine Service Operations Centre considers requests for exemptions from quarantine. As of 1 April 2021, the unit has 60 staff who operate a seven-day shift pattern. The average number of staff at the requested times is shown in the following table.

TIME	AVERAGE NUMBER OF STAFF
6am	1
12pm	15
6pm	15
12am	1

■ Early Years Healthy Development Review: Finance

Sarah Olney:[\[1148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the funds needed to implement the recommendations in the early years Leadsom review have been secured.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: The implementation phase of the Early Years Healthy Development Review is being funded by the Department. During this phase the team will work with local leaders and HM Treasury to understand efficiencies and to build the economic case for further investment in the Start for Life. The vision document and the areas for action it describes, do not pre-empt any future spending events.

■ Eating Disorders: Death

Caroline Nokes:[\[2951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to collect information on deaths recorded from eating disorders.

Caroline Nokes:[\[2952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that deaths from eating disorders are accurately recorded.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for collecting information on deaths, including any where an eating disorder may have played a role. The ONS has advised that official statistics on deaths are based on the data collected as part of civil registration, which are based in turn on the medical certificate of cause of death completed by a doctor or the conclusions of a coroner following an inquest.

Doctors determine the cause of death according to their professional knowledge and belief. They can record the sequence of health problems or events leading to a death and any other health conditions that contributed but were not directly the cause. If the certifier believes, on the basis of the evidence available to them, that an eating disorder was involved, they can record this as a contributing factor in the cause of death.

■ Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

Bill Esterson:

[\[1301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the prevalence of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD); and what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of services for people with FASD.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines published in 2016 provide advice to women not to drink alcohol if they are planning a pregnancy or are pregnant. Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement and local commissioners continue to raise awareness of the risks of drinking whilst pregnant. The Government is funding five voluntary organisations to support grassroots initiatives to prevent cases of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), raise awareness among professionals and help improve support for those living with its consequences.

No recent assessment has been made of services for people with FASD. However, we have asked the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to produce a Quality Standard in England for FASD to help the health and care system improve diagnosis and care of those affected, which is expected to be published later this year.

■ Gambling

Paul Blomfield:

[\[5189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to include arrangements for the commissioning of clinical treatment for gambling disorder in proposals for a new health and care Bill.

Jo Churchill:

There are no current plans to do so.

■ Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[4632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to use learning from the delivery of the covid-19 vaccine to deliver NHS Health Checks to support public health and health prevention measures.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Health Check Expert Scientific and Clinical Advisory Panel (ESCAP) acts in an advisory capacity to support successful deployment, maintenance, evaluation and continued improvement of the Health Checks programme based on the best available evidence. Any emerging research or evaluation on the COVID-19 vaccine programme, which may have implications for the NHS Health Check, will be considered by ESCAP.

Health Services: Yorkshire and the Humber**Rachael Maskell:**[\[3967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the roll out of community diagnostic hubs in (a) Yorkshire and (b) York.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service is planning to launch 44 community diagnostic hubs this year. In Humber, Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership, which includes North Yorkshire and York, a series of workshops have been taking place in April and May, involving a wide range of partners from across primary, community and hospital healthcare settings, to agree a plan for the community diagnostic hubs. It is intended that plans for each location will be set out by September 2021, including the plan for rapid implementation of some community services in 2021/22.

HIV Infection: Vaccination**Catherine West:**[\[4650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the development of a potential HIV vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Since 2013, the NIHR has supported five studies investigating the development of HIV vaccines through its research infrastructure. The NIHR has also funded a wide portfolio of awards investigating other methods of HIV prophylaxis, for a combined total investment of almost £11 million since 2010. As the nation's largest funder of health and care research, the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including on HIV vaccine development and HIV prevention more broadly.

The Department will be publishing a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and a HIV Action Plan in 2021. HIV prevention approaches, including any new evidence related to potential HIV vaccines, will be considered as part of the development process.

■ Hospitals: Admissions

Margaret Greenwood: [775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the number of patients readmitted to hospital within 30 days of discharge under the Discharge to Assess model in each year from 2016 by primary discharge code.

Margaret Greenwood: [776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of patients under the Discharge to Assess model were readmitted within 30 days of discharge since 2016; and if he will make a comparative assessment of that proportion with the proportion of all other patients discharged from acute care and readmitted within 30 days in the same period.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: The Discharge to Assess model ensures people who are clinically ready and no longer need to be in hospital, are safely supported to return to their place of residence, where possible, for a period of reablement and rehabilitation. Following this an assessment of longer-term needs can take place.

Data is not held centrally on the number of patients who have been discharged using the Discharge to Assess model in pilot schemes since 2016, as these pilots were locally implemented. Data is therefore unavailable on the number of patients who have been readmitted to hospital within 30 days from these pilot schemes.

The Discharge to Assess policy was implemented in March 2020 and as such there were no locations where the policy was not in operation. Data in relation to readmissions since the policy has been in place is not yet available and therefore no comparative assessment has been made.

However, NHS Digital publish data on the emergency readmissions to hospital within 30 days of discharge annually, with the latest publication for 2019 to 2020 available at:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/compendium-emergency-readmissions/current/emergency-readmissions-to-hospital-within-30-days-of-discharge-by-diagnosis>

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Olivia Blake: [3213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure consistency in the way chief coroners record deaths where the cause is covid-19 acquired in a hospital.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The circumstances in which a medical practitioner must notify a death to the coroner are set out in the Notification of Death Regulations 2019. It is a judicial decision of the

coroner as to whether they have a duty under section 1 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 to investigate a death referred to them.

Medical practitioners are expected to state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief on the medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD). Revised guidance published by the General Register Office and the Office for National Statistics to medical practitioners completing MCCD during the period of the pandemic confirms that COVID-19 is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the MCCD. This guidance also confirms that COVID-19 is not a reason of itself to refer a death to a coroner under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-notes-for-completing-a-medical-certificate-of-cause-of-death>

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Jon Trickett:

[2888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what are the average waiting times for (a) accident and emergency and (b) planned operations in each region of the UK.

Edward Argar:

The average waiting times for accident and emergency (A&E) in each region of the United Kingdom is not available in the format requested. Data collections for A&E and planned operations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is a devolved matter.

The average median waiting times in weeks for planned operations and other elective care listed as incomplete referral to treatment pathways in each region of England in March 2021 is shown in the following table.

REGION	MEDIAN TIME IN WEEKS
NHS England East of England	12.6
NHS England London	11.1
NHS England Midlands	12.9
NHS England North East and Yorkshire	9.4
NHS England North West	11.3
NHS England South East	11.3
NHS England South West	11.7

Carla Lockhart:

[4753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many completed admitted pathways there were in each month during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

The number of completed admitted pathways since January 2020 is shown in the following table.

DATE	TOTAL COMPLETED ADMITTED PATHWAYS
January 2020	304,888
February 2020	285,918
March 2020	207,754
April 2020	41,121
May 2020	54,550
June 2020	94,354
July 2020	142,818
August 2020	155,789
September 2020	209,562
October 2020	232,487
November 2020	222,810
December 2020	190,604
January 2021	139,378
February 2021	152,642
March 2021	220,349

■ Hypertension: DNA**Jim Shannon:**[\[2981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the British Heart Foundation research, published 7 May 2021, entitled Genes responsible for high blood pressure discovered in the human kidney.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has yet been made.

■ Livestock Industry

Jonathan Edwards: [2259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Ministers last met the (a) Food Standards Agency and (b) bodies representing businesses operating in the post farm gate meat processing sector to discuss issues relating to (i) the livestock industry in general and (ii) the functioning of abattoirs.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: There have been no specific meetings on these issues.

■ Malnutrition

Rachael Maskell: [3051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the importance of the identification of underlying health conditions to help prevent disease-related malnutrition in the restructuring of the health and social care system.

Rachael Maskell: [3053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has on disease-related malnutrition policy in the health and social care system restructuring.

Jo Churchill:

The Office for Health Promotion will include subject-matter expertise on a range of important public health issues including nutrition.

Those who have special dietary requirements, medical needs or require specialised nutrition advice should seek this from a registered healthcare professional.

■ Malnutrition: Older People

Rachael Maskell: [3052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the importance of (a) patient choice, (b) innovation, (c) diversity of supply and (d) equality of access in malnutrition treatment for older people.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made. Malnutrition services are part of locally commissioned services through clinical commissioning groups who provide services based on the needs of their local populace.

The healthcare professional in charge of an individual's care, will be best placed to identify and arrange appropriate treatment considering the needs and preferences of the individual.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Tony Lloyd: [\[2890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 3 March 2021 from the hon. Member for Rochdale on differential pricing policies for covid-19 vaccinations.

Edward Argar:

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

■ **Mental Health Services: Telemedicine**

Rosie Cooper: [\[4567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on patients of moving further NHS mental health services to the telephone and online.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Wakefield (Imran Ahmad Khan MP) on 18 May to Question [539](#).

■ **Mental Health Services: Young People**

Zarah Sultana: [\[4721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his department is taking to support people under the age of 30 experiencing heightened mental health issues during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have put in place resources to help people look after their mental health and wellbeing, including Public Health England's Every Mind Matters resources and personalised Mind Plan – a targeted action plan with National Health Service-endorsed advice and tips to improve mood and wellbeing.

In March we launched a Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, to ensure that we have the right support in place over the next year. This will allow around 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services, 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services and a faster increase in the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges over the 2021/22 financial year. It will also ensure young adults aged 18 to 25 years old, including university students, are supported with tailored mental health support, helping bridge the gap between children's and adult services.

■ **Ministerial Duties: Children**

Sarah Olney: [\[1149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a Cabinet minister with responsibility for the needs of babies and young children.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: The Prime Minister will nominate a Cabinet Minister who will have responsibility for the 'Start for Life' period. A decision on who fulfils this role will be made in due course.

■ Peripheral Arterial Disease

Emma Hardy:

[\[2422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients are on community caseloads for lower limb arterial and/or venous disease treatment; what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders on the difficulties people with lower limb arterial and/or venous disease are experiencing in accessing NHS services; what steps he will take through the upcoming NHS Bill to alleviate those barriers; and if he will make a statement.

Emma Hardy:

[\[2423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS Reset, what steps the Government is taking to help people with (a) lower limb venous insufficiency and (b) venous leg ulcers to gain access to NHS elective services; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: The number of patients on community caseloads for lower limb arterial and/or venous disease treatment is not held centrally. NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) has a patient and public voice (PPV) stakeholder forum. Lower limb arterial and/or venous disease services are developed in consultation with patients and carers via the PPV forum.

The Health and Care Bill will introduce integrated care systems, which will strengthen partnerships between the National Health Service, local authorities and with local partners, including groups representing the public and patient perspective, the voluntary sector and wider public service provision. This will enable more joined up planning and provision, enhancing lower limb arterial and/or venous disease services patients receive.

The NWCSP is developing implementation sites across England to implement its lower limb wound recommendations that will allow people with lower limb venous insufficiency and venous leg ulcers to receive equitable care in dedicated chronic lower limb services staffed by clinicians with the appropriate knowledge and skills and with established referral routes to escalate care.

■ Pharmacy

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with community pharmacists on how they can (a) support GPs and (b) help relieve the pressures on GP waiting lists.

Jo Churchill:

Departmental Ministers and officials regularly discuss a range of matters with community pharmacists and other stakeholders in the sector.

Under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 five-year deal, community pharmacy will be more integrated into the National Health Service, deliver more clinical services. NHS111 can refer patients to a community pharmacist for minor illness or the urgent supply of a prescribed medicine. At the end of last year, we extended this service to general practitioner surgeries, who can now also formally refer patients to community pharmacy for consultation. We expect to introduce more clinical services in community pharmacy to relieve pressure on other parts of the NHS.

■ Prostate Cancer**Alex Norris:**[\[4686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many qualified non-medical practitioners there are in the NHS Prostate Cancer Workforce in England; and how many there were in 2019.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

■ Radiology**Christian Wakeford:**[\[3215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Cancer Workforce Plan, what progress Health Education England has made on achieving its target of FTE 2227 diagnostic radiographers in place by 2021.

Christian Wakeford:[\[3216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of Health Education England to achieve the objectives of the Cancer Workforce Plan by 2021; and if he will outline the steps he is taking to develop that plan after 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Health Education England (HEE) will publish an assessment of progress on the diagnostic radiography ambition once National Health Service Hospital and Community Health Service workforce statistics for March 2021 have been published by NHS Digital and analysed by HEE.

In 2021/22 HEE will continue implementation of the cancer workforce plan, including training grants for cancer nurse specialists and chemotherapy nurses, support for reporting radiographers and an increase in postgraduate medical training places across the key cancer medical professions of clinical radiology, oncology, histopathology, and gastroenterology.

■ Smoking: Young People

Carla Lockhart: [4745]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to prevent young people from taking up smoking.

Jo Churchill:

Later this year, we will publish a new tobacco control plan which will outline further plans to protect young people from smoking and to support our ambition to become smoke-free by 2030.

■ Social Services: Reform

Esther McVey: [2960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish his Department's proposed timetable for the introduction of social care reform policies.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals for reform this year.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Patrick Grady: [3020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on the total number of (a) covid-19 tests taken and (b) covid-19 tests returned positive by people required to go into managed isolation on arrival at the UK Border since the introduction of that requirement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: The data on the number of COVID-19 tests taken by people in managed quarantine is published as part of the weekly NHS Test and Trace statistics, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports>

The data on the number of COVID-19 tests returned positive by people in managed quarantine will be validated and published in due course.

Ian Mearns: [683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the criteria used to determine which countries fall into the (a) red, (b) amber and (c) green categories for the purposes of international travel under covid-19 restrictions.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: A traffic light system is used to categorise countries based on risk. The decisions on red, amber or green list assignment are taken by the Government, informed by evidence which includes risk assessments undertaken by the Joint Biosecurity Centre alongside other wider public health factors.

A summary of the methodology used to inform these decisions is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-risk-assessment-methodology-to-inform-international-travel-traffic-light-system/risk-assessment-methodology-to-inform-international-travel-traffic-light-system>

Alex Cunningham:

[705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the Government placed the UAE on the red list for travel.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: Decisions to place countries, including UAE, on the 'red list' are taken by the Government to protect public health. They are informed by evidence including the Joint Biosecurity Centre's risks assessments alongside wider public health factors.

The advice, evidence and methodology which informs these decisions relates to on-going development of Government policy and we are unable to provide this specific information at this time.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Imran Hussain:

[2304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the list of medical conditions that exempt an individual from the requirement to stay in a managed quarantine hotel on their return from a covid-19 red list country.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: There are some extremely limited circumstances where due to pre-existing severe medical conditions or vulnerabilities, an individual may be incapable of entering a managed quarantine facility because they cannot be supported there. There is not a pre-defined list of medical conditions that exempt an individual from the requirement to stay in a managed quarantine hotel on arrival from a 'red list' country as each case is assessed on an individual basis taking into account the needs of the traveller and the impact that quarantine within a hotel facility would have upon their health and wellbeing.

Imran Hussain:

[2306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with the corporate travel management sector to tackle the issue of travellers returning to the UK from covid-19 red list countries being unable to book accommodation in a managed quarantine hotel.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: An additional seven hotels have been brought into the Managed Quarantine Service to increase hotel availability. In addition, discussions are underway with other regional airports to become a designated 'red list' arrival ports which will also add additional capacity in areas outside of the South

East. We closely monitor future demand against available hotel capacity and adjust the number of hotels accordingly.

Imran Hussain:

[\[2307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is adequate capacity in managed covid-19 quarantine hotels to accommodate travellers who are returning from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: An additional seven hotels have been brought into the Managed Quarantine Service to increase hotel availability. In addition, discussions are underway with other regional airports to become designated 'red list' arrival ports which will also add additional capacity in areas outside of the South East. We closely monitor future demand against available hotel capacity and adjust the number of hotels contracted to support managed quarantine accordingly.

■ World Health Organisation: Finance

Adam Afriyie:

[\[1285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control criticism of a harm reduction approach to tobacco control implemented by the UK, what plans he has to maintain the current level of UK funding for the WHO.

Jo Churchill:

We remain committed to providing assessed contributions to fund the work of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and Protocol.

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments

Caroline Lucas:

[\[2252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether, following the UK's exit from the EU, it remains a policy priority of the Government to achieve the goal of full replacement of procedures on live animals for scientific and educational purposes as soon as it is scientifically possible to do so, in line with (a) recital (10) of Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and (b) the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (as amended); and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK's rigorous regulatory system requires that no animal testing takes place if there is a validated non-animal alternative that would achieve the scientific outcomes sought. Prior to any work being authorised, project licence proposals for research on animals for which there is no non-animal alternative must comply fully with the principles of the 3Rs: replacement, reduction and refinement.

■ Antisemitism: Greater London

Michael Fabricant:

[\[2182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take in response to anti-Semitic abuse from and reported incitements to violence by pro-Palestinian demonstrators visiting London against Jewish people on 15 to 16 May 2021; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is clear that any criminal activity, including the incitement of violence or racial hatred, is completely unacceptable. We have robust laws to tackle such criminal offences.

The Metropolitan Police Service is investigating a number of allegations in relation to recent demonstrations in London.

■ Asylum: Iraq

Bill Esterson:

[\[2953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of Iraqi translators who worked for the British Army in Iraq that are seeking asylum in the UK; and what steps she is taking to support their asylum claims.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: We successfully resettled interpreters and their families from Iraq in recognition of the huge debt of gratitude we owed them for risking their lives alongside UK armed forces. This scheme included relocation to the UK or a financial payment for eligible members of staff.

Although this scheme has now closed, we still have a proud record of supporting those in danger of persecution and all asylum claims lodged in the UK are carefully considered on their individual merits including those claims made by Iraqi translators who worked for the British Army.

Additionally, Migrant Help provide independent advice and guidance to assist those considering seeking asylum and those who have claimed asylum to move through and understand the asylum process.

The Home Office is unable to state how many asylum applications have been made by Iraqi translators who worked for the British Army in Iraq as such data can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Asylum: Medical Records

Mike Kane:

[\[4614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the patient consent process for people seeking asylum when sharing medical information with the her Department at registration.

Kevin Foster:

There is not a specific patient consent process at registration which seeks to access a claimant's medical records at this stage in the asylum process.

Individuals seeking asylum can be asked to complete a medical consent form at any stage in the asylum process where a specific issue or a concern is raised. This can be for a number of reasons which are usually related to safeguarding a vulnerable individual.

In terms of sharing information, all asylum claimants are made aware we may share information with other UK government departments or agencies, including the National Health Service, local authorities, asylum authorities of other countries, international organisations or other bodies. This is to enable us and other organisations to carry out their functions, including the prevention and detection of crime.

Claimants are also informed we do not disclose, to their own country, the fact they have claimed asylum in the UK, but we may share some information, for example, to help obtain travel documentation if their claim is refused.

We have recently updated our guidance on disclosure of information in asylum claims and it is available on gov.uk at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/disclosure-of-information-relating-to-asylum-applications

■ Daniel Morgan Independent Panel

Chris Bryant: [4549]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will agree a date with the (a) family of Daniel Morgan and (b) Daniel Morgan Independent Panel for the publication of the panel's report.

Chris Bryant: [4550]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the hon. Member for Maidenhead on the report of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel.

Chris Bryant: [4551]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received, and from whom, regarding conducting a review of the Report of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Secretary is working with the Chair of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel to agree a date for publication. The Home Secretary has not yet received the report from the DMIP. The Home Secretary has a responsibility to review the report to ensure publication complies with human rights obligations and that it doesn't cause any risk to national security should either arise. As soon as the Home Secretary

receives the report and has discharged her responsibilities, she will agree a date for publication of the report.

The Home Secretary has confirmed she hasn't had any substantive engagement or discussions with the MP for Maidenhead regarding the report of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel.

The Home Secretary's review is purely for the purpose of ensuring that the publication of the report does not breach her human rights and national security responsibilities in relation to publication. The Home Secretary is fully aware of her responsibilities and is committed to complying with them.

The Home Secretary has been advised by Home Office lawyers and has received advice from external Counsel.

■ Immigration

Caroline Lucas:

[2946]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current timescale is for processing leave to remain renewals; what proportion of such renewals cases have been waiting (a) the former service standard time of two months, (b) over four months and (c) longer than six months; what steps she is taking to (i) make the system efficient and (ii) reduce waiting periods; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

Information on performance against service standards is routinely published as part of the UKVI Transparency data.

The current data is available for Quarter 4 of 2020 and can be found in the attached link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visas-and-citizenship-data-february-2021>

Data for Quarter 1 of 2021 will be published in the next Transparency data release.

Due to the pandemic, there have been some delays to the application process, but we continue to process all applications as quickly as possible.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[4683]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UK nationals resident in (a) the UK, (b) Berkshire and (c) Slough received the recent letter from her Department advising them to apply for settled status or risk losing rights to work and access healthcare; and what steps her Department is taking to apologise and reassure UK nationals of their rights.

Kevin Foster:

The Government is using every possible channel to encourage everyone who may be eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to apply.

The Home Office is currently working with HMRC and DWP to send letters to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who receive benefits, but it appears are yet to apply to the EUSS. These letters, sent by HMRC and DWP, seek to encourage recipients to apply to the EUSS to protect their existing rights in the UK before the deadline of 30 June 2021.

In trying to reach as many people as possible, there may be a small number of instances where these letters are sent to recipients across the UK who are naturalised as a British citizen. The letter may also be received by a small number of individuals who have already applied to the EUSS, for example because they applied after the initial exercise with DWP or HMRC was completed, but before the letter was sent out.

The letters make clear anyone who is a British citizen or already has EUSS status does not need to take any action. Further reassurance, providing the same messaging, has also been posted on the Home Office's, DWP's and HMRC's Twitter channels.

As of 30 April 2021, 4.9m grants of EUSS status have been made.

■ Independent Office for Police Conduct: Finance

Andrew Selous:

[\[2224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the budget is for the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

Kit Malthouse:

The IOPC's budget for 2021/22 is £69.65 million.

■ Internet: Safety

Chi Onwurah:

[\[2286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps a company is obliged to take to get (a) existing and (b) new technology accredited status in the context of clause 66 in the Online Safety Bill.

Kevin Foster:

Under the Online Safety Bill, OFCOM will be able to require companies to use technology to identify terrorism content or child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) content, provided certain conditions are met. This important power will enable OFCOM to require companies to use technology to take effective action to keep users safe from these most serious harms.

This technology must be accredited (by OFCOM or another person appointed by OFCOM) as meeting the minimum standards of accuracy as approved by the Secretary of State, following advice from OFCOM. We are currently working with OFCOM to design the processes for identifying and approving minimum standards of accuracy and for accrediting technologies which meet those standards of accuracy.

It is worth noting minimum standards of accuracy and a requirement to use accredited technology will apply only when OFCOM issues a notice under the specific powers in the Online Safety Bill which requires a company to use technology to identify and remove CSEA or terrorism content. They will not apply to technology which companies use to identify and remove harmful content voluntarily.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Safety

Alyn Smith:

[3160]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the safety of hauliers at the (a) UK's borders and (b) ferry port and tunnel freight terminal at Coquelles.

Chris Philp:

The safety of hauliers within Border Force controls is a priority. Guidance can be found on the.gov.uk on securing your vehicle when entering the UK at

[.gov.uk guidance Securing your vehicle when entering the UK](#)

The Department for Transport is responsible for maintaining high standards of safety and security in transport and supporting the maritime sector by producing the overall strategy and planning policy for ports in England and Wales.

The safety of hauliers on French soil is a matter for the French authorities. The UK has though provided significant investment to improve physical security at the ports and approach roads in northern France.

■ Migrants: Coronavirus

Stephen Timms:

[2172]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prepare for potential changes to the number of No Recourse to Public Funds change of conditions applications as a result of the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: The Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is currently extended until 30 September 2021. UK Visas and Immigration constantly monitor intake volumes and adjust resources accordingly. Whilst it is not necessarily an automatic consequence that change of conditions applications will increase at the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, UK Visas and Immigration will respond as appropriate if this is the case.

Published transparency data on Change of Conditions applications can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-february-2021> At the end of the last calendar year the average turnaround for Change of Conditions applications was 18 days.

■ Refugees: Children

Zarah Sultana: [4715]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to establish a safe passage for child refugees arriving in the UK.

Chris Philp:

The Government committed to review safe and legal routes to the UK, and has a statutory duty to conduct a public consultation on family reunion for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU. We are meeting our statutory duty by completing a comprehensive consultation and engagement process as part of the wider consultation on the New Plan for Immigration, which closed on 6 May 2021. We will consider the consultation responses carefully.

The UK already provides a number of routes for children to reunite with family members in the UK under our Immigration Rules. We have also published guidance that signposts these existing routes at the link below:

[Overview of family reunion options in the Immigration Rules - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/overview-of-family-reunion-options-in-the-immigration-rules)

■ Undocumented Migrants: Deportation

Kate Osamor: [2384]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with which countries she has concluded readmission agreements for irregular migrants.

Chris Philp:

The UK already has arrangements with many countries across the world to facilitate the returns of irregular migrants. This year we have just agreed a Migration and Mobility Partnership with India, which commits both countries to greater cooperation on returning illegal migrants back to their country of origin.

The Joint Political Declaration between the EU and UK agreed in December 2020 noted the UK's intention to engage in bilateral discussions with the most concerned Member States to discuss suitable practical arrangements, including on asylum and illegal migration. These discussions are continuing.

■ Visas: Voluntary Work

Sarah Olney: [2393]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason people who enter the UK on a visitor visa are unable to volunteer.

Kevin Foster:

Visitors to the UK can undertake a wide range of activities, including volunteering. The volunteering should last no more than 30 days in total and be for a charity registered with either the Charity Commission for England and Wales; the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland; or the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Undertaking voluntary work for longer periods of time is provided for in the Temporary Worker - Charity Worker route of the points-based system.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Building Safety Fund

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[2943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the current shortage of safe cladding materials does not negatively effect the rollout of the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

Department officials are currently using their ongoing engagement with industry to ensure that any potential implications for the remediation programme are understood and action is taken where needed to ensure that the Government's priorities for building safety are met.

■ Coastal Areas: Government Assistance

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[4613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to increase economic activity in coastal communities.

Luke Hall:

We are committed to increasing economic activity in our coastal communities. Our coastal areas have already benefited from over £250 million through successful bids into Town Deals and from the Future High Streets Fund. At Budget 2021, the Chancellor announced 7 Freeports in coastal areas, which will boost economic activity further in these communities

This is all in addition to the £6 million available through the Welcome Back Fund to support coastal areas; offering assistance of up to £100,000 to help address the unique challenges facing these areas as restrictions ease. Further support will be available through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need. Coastal places can also bid into the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund.

■ Hate Crime

Afzal Khan:

[\[4692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the rise in (a) anti-Semitic and (b) Islamophobic hate crime in the UK as a result of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Luke Hall:

There is no place in our society for the shocking rise of Antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents that have been seen as a result of the conflict. We are absolutely clear that

this is unacceptable, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime against any and all communities.

This Government has a strong record on tackling hate crime against religious communities; following our encouragement, we have seen nearly 3 quarters of local authorities and 91 higher education providers adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and take an important step to combatting this hatred.

We have also taken steps in protecting the Muslim communities; providing over £5 million in the last 5 years to the Places of Worship protective security funding scheme, which has helped protect at least 84 Mosques. We have also supported Tell MAMA with just over £2.8 million between 2016 and 2020 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred.

■ Homelessness: Charities

Rachael Maskell: [\[3046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many times he has met with representatives from the (a) Salvation Army and (b) other charities that deal with homelessness since being appointed in 2019.

Eddie Hughes:

Ministers meet with charities that deal with homelessness on a regular basis. Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on Gov.uk.

■ Housing: Building Alterations

Mark Pritchard: [\[3826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to allow the extension of existing residential properties for enabling family members to move in for social care purposes.

Eddie Hughes:

Under the householder permitted development rights (set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) homeowners are already able to add extensions to their properties to create additional living space.

■ Housing: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[2360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will meet with the hon. Member for York Central to discuss the shortage of housing in York.

Christopher Pincher:

We are committed to supporting the supply of new homes, across the country. Our planning reforms will be a crucial step in making sure we have the right number of homes in the right places.

We are providing £77.1 million in Housing Investment Grant funding to the York Central project, to unlock 2,500 homes on a brownfield city centre location next to York Railway Station

I would be delighted to meet the honourable lady to discuss housing in her local area.

■ Refuges

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[2405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the reasons for 57 per cent of referrals to refuge services having been declined in 2019-20.

Eddie Hughes:

From extensive engagement with the sector, we know that stable funding and effective commissioning of support within safe accommodation is vital to successful delivery of these services.

Many local areas already provide services that ensure victims have somewhere safe to go.

To support these services further we have introduced a new statutory duty on local authorities within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to ensure that all victims, including children, have access to safety and support within safe accommodation when they need it.

This has been backed by £125 million funding for 2021/22 and will be funded in future years.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[3111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the joint briefing from Shelter and Women's Aid entitled The Benefit Cap and Domestic Abuse, published May 2021, whether she has made an assessment of the reasons why (a) Black and minoritised women, (b) women with no recourse to public funds, (c) deaf and disabled women, (d) women with mental health and substance use needs are the most likely to be turned away from a refuge space; and what steps the Government is taking to support women in those groups.

Eddie Hughes:

We recognise that victims of domestic abuse with additional and / or multiple complex support needs can face challenges in accessing safe accommodation, including refuge.

We have extensively engaged with the sector on these issues and that is why under a new duty in the Domestic Abuse Act, local authorities will be required to assess the need for and provide appropriate support for all victims within safe accommodation.

The [draft Statutory Guidance](#) underpinning the duty makes clear that local authorities must consider the specific needs of victims with additional or multiple complex needs - such as those from Black and minoritised communities, disabled victims or victims

with mental health and substance misuse needs - when conducting their needs assessments and strategies. It also makes clear the importance of specialist services that provide vital, tailored support to victims with specific needs.

The Government has also provided £1.5 million for a new Support for Migrant Victims Scheme which will provide vital support and accommodation to migrant victims and their children and, help the Government to gain an accurate picture of support needed to shape future programmes across the UK.

■ Rents: Arrears

Jon Trickett:

[2885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of renters who in arrears in each region of the UK in the latest period for which figures are available.

Eddie Hughes:

Data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) Household Resilience Study November-December 2020 suggests that 9% of private rented households and 11% of social rented households are in arrears.

The regional distribution of renters (social and private) in arrears is provided in Table T16a of the Household Resilience Study Wave 2: Wave 2 tables, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-2>

The UK Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support which is available to tenants. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit are in place until the end of September helping renters to continue paying their rent. Local housing allowance rates have been maintained at their increased level in cash terms in 2021/22, meaning claimants renting in the private rented sector continue to benefit from the significant increase in the local housing allowance rates applied in April 2020. For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available. For 2021-22 the Government has made £140 million available in DHP funding, building on the £180 million provided last year.

■ Right to Buy Scheme: West Yorkshire

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[2486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many homes have been purchased using the Right to Buy Equity Loan Scheme in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire since 2013.

Christopher Pincher:

There is no Right to Buy Equity Loan Scheme; however, Government has provided the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme since 2013.

Between 1 April 2013 and 31 December 2020, 11,433 homes were purchased within the metropolitan county of West Yorkshire (which is comprised of the boroughs of

Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield) using the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme. Further data on the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-december-2020/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-december-2020>

■ Social Rented Housing: Overcrowding

Rachael Maskell:

[3044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many times he has met with families living in overcrowded social housing since being appointed in 2019; and what steps he is planning to tackle that overcrowding.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to protecting the most vulnerable in society, and this is why we have ensured that tackling overcrowding continues to be a key priority.

Where vulnerable tenants are living in overcrowded accommodation, our guidance advises that local authorities can use their enforcement powers to require a landlord to remedy a serious overcrowding hazard.

Local authorities must ensure that people in housing need receive 'reasonable preference' (overall priority) for social housing, including those in overcrowded, insanitary or unsuitable housing. Local authorities may also give 'additional preference' (high priority) to people in urgent housing need, and statutory guidance makes clear that this includes families in severe overcrowding which poses a serious health hazard.

The Government's strategy to increase supply of social housing is also important in addressing overcrowding issues. We are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new Affordable Homes Programme, which will deliver around 32,000 homes for social rent - more than double the number than the current programme.

■ Social Rented Housing: Succession

Rachael Maskell:

[3042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to review succession rules to prevent the next of kin from being evicted in the event that the registered tenant in social housing passes away.

Eddie Hughes:

The Localism Act 2011 has made changes to the rules on succession to social tenancies. From April 2012, rather than being limited by law to providing only one statutory succession, social landlords are able to give to new tenants whatever additional succession rights they deem to be appropriate in the tenancy agreement. This means that, for example, adult children who have lived in a property for many years can be provided with the assurance of a right to succeed to the tenancy regardless of whether a previous succession has already taken place.

In addition, social landlords are able to grant, to those who remain in the home after the death of the tenant but have no succession rights, a new tenancy in the same or another more suitable property, provided that is in line with their own policies for allocating tenancies.

Local housing authorities have been encouraged to consider how they can make best use of these existing flexibilities and to provide examples of good practice so that these can be shared more widely.

In addition, where family members other than a spouse or partner have a statutory right to succeed to a local authority tenancy, the landlord may seek to evict them if the property is or will become under-occupied. However, the landlord must ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is made available.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agricultural Products: Import Duties

Gareth Thomas:

[2866]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effect on UK producers of providing duty and tariff free access to agricultural goods from (a) Australia (b) New Zealand and (c) the United States of America; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

HM Government has always been clear that any deals it signs will include protections for the agricultural sector, and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards. The Government is seeking deals that work for UK farmers and producers.

The Government carried out public consultations and scoping assessments for each FTA negotiation, which can be found on the Government's website. These preliminary scoping assessments considered two different scenarios. Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment will be published prior to implementation.

Gareth Thomas:

[2867]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the cumulative effect on UK producers of providing duty- and tariff-free access to agricultural goods to (a) Australia and New Zealand, (b) Australia and the United States, (c) New Zealand and the United States and (d) Australia, New Zealand and the United States; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

HM Government has always been clear that any deals it signs will include protections for the agricultural sector, and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards. The Government is seeking deals that work for our farmers and producers.

The Department for International Trade is carefully considering the individual and combined effect of the agreements that are being negotiated, including enhanced export opportunities for UK agricultural producers. The Department is working closely across government to ensure that our trade policy does not undermine UK farmers and producers of agricultural goods.

■ Arms Trade: Israel

Layla Moran:

[\[4015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many UK arms export licences have been granted to (a) Jaguar Land Rover and (b) MDT Armor Corporation for exports of (i) armoured land rovers and (ii) other land rovers to Israel as at 18 May 2021.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Our records indicate that, between 2000 and 2020, seven licences have been granted to Land Rover Exports Ltd; and no licences have been granted to MDT Armor Corporation.

Of the licences granted to Land Rover Exports Ltd, four were for Land Rover vehicles. Two of the licences were granted for armoured vehicles, for the protection of staff on diplomatic missions, and a further two licences were granted for non-armoured vehicles.

HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria').

■ Import Duties: USA

John Lamont:

[\[3989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made with the US Administration on making the temporary suspension of tariffs on Scotch whisky, cashmere and other products permanent.

Greg Hands:

HM Government is focused on an ambitious programme of bilateral talks with the US during the four-month tariff suspension, and is making progress towards a settlement that works for the whole of the UK and keeps harmful tariffs off.

The Secretary of State for International Trade engages with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai on this issue at every opportunity, and both are committed to finding a fair and permanent settlement to the disputes, that paves the way for an even stronger trading relationship.

■ Shipping: Exports

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[4570]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to support UK maritime businesses to export clean maritime technologies globally as part of the Government's commitment to reducing emissions from international shipping.

Graham Stuart:

In support of the National Shipbuilding Strategy, the Department for International Trade (DIT) will launch a Clean Green Shipbuilding Export Campaign at London International Shipping Week in September, as part of the wider DIT Clean Growth Export Strategy. DIT is also working with other Government departments to highlight UK green marine expertise to a global audience during COP 26 in November.

Shipyards and other maritime exporters can also access UK Export Finance (UKEF) support which helps them compete for international business. The sector can benefit from UKEF's £2 billion Direct Lending Facility dedicated to clean growth projects, which offers competitive fixed rates of interest. UKEF's Transition Export Development Guarantee is available to enable oil and gas focused exporters with credible clean energy transition plans to access working capital support.

■ Trade Agreements

Gareth Thomas:

[2872]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to measure the potential effects of trade agreements that her Department has negotiated on (a) differing sectoral interests in the UK and (b) developing nations; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

HM Government is committed to an inclusive and transparent trade policy.

Scoping Assessments are published to provide a preliminary assessment in advance of negotiations. Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full Impact Assessment (IA) is published prior to implementation. These documents set out the Government's assessment of the potential long run effects of new free trade agreements, including on sectors and developing nations.

The Government has already published Scoping Assessments for agreements with the United States, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. An IA for the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has also been published.

Rachael Maskell:

[3048]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade deals are currently being actively negotiated; which countries are covered in those negotiations; and what the expected date for completion is for those negotiations.

Rachael Maskell:

[3049]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade deals are currently being actively considered; which countries are covered in those proposals; and what the planned start date is for those negotiations.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has an ambitious programme of trade negotiations, as we work to become a truly Global Britain. We are currently pursuing negotiations with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the European Economic Area (EEA), which consists of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. We have always been clear that negotiating a comprehensive and ambitious deal is more important than meeting any particular deadline.

Beyond these negotiations, we wish to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP); we have announced a new Enhanced Trade Partnership with India, which will pave the way for a future United Kingdom-India FTA; and we will be seeking to enhance to our existing FTAs with Canada and Mexico.

■ **Trade Agreements: Australasia**

Gareth Thomas:

[2871]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential (a) merits and (b) risks of including investor state mechanisms in trade deals with (i) Australia and (ii) New Zealand; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The precise details of the Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Agreements are a matter for formal negotiations, and the Department would not seek to pre-empt these discussions.

If it is deemed that a legal mechanism is appropriate for resolving investment disputes, the mechanism will reflect modern practice, deliver fair outcomes of claims, require high ethical standards for arbitrators, and include transparent proceedings.

There has never been a successful Investor State Dispute Settlement claim against the United Kingdom, nor has the threat of potential claims affected our legislation.

■ **Trade Agreements: Australasia and North America**

Gareth Thomas:

[2868]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her Department has identified as strategically sensitive sectors in future trade negotiations and renegotiations with (a) Australia, (b) New Zealand, (c) The United States of America, (d) Canada and (e) Mexico; and if she will make statement.

Greg Hands:

Negotiations are currently ongoing with Australia, New Zealand, and the United States on deals that will have significant benefits for the whole of the United Kingdom.

In preparation for negotiations with Canada and Mexico, the Department for International Trade (DIT) has just launched a call for input which will help understand business and stakeholder's interests, as well as strategically sensitive sectors.

DIT is unable to comment on sensitive issues regarding ongoing negotiations, as it would compromise such negotiations. However, as soon as it is possible, DIT will inform Parliament of the progress and outcomes of the negotiations.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[3839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what protections there will be for British farmers under a trade deal with Australia.

Greg Hands:

HM Government wants to secure an ambitious free trade deal with Australia that benefits businesses across the UK.

Any deal the UK signs with Australia will include protections for the agriculture industry and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards.

Tariff liberalisation is often staged over time, with safeguards built in. The government's aim in negotiations is to secure a balanced and mutually beneficial liberalisation of tariffs, taking into account specific UK product sensitivities.

HM Government will continue to work with the industry, keeping them involved throughout the process and helping it capture the full benefits of trade.

■ Trade Agreements: G7**Ruth Jones:**[\[4028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her trade priorities are for the upcoming G7 summit.

Ruth Jones:[\[4029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with the Welsh Government on her Department's trade priorities for the upcoming G7 summit.

Ruth Jones:[\[4030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with the Scottish Government on her Department's trade priorities for the upcoming G7 summit.

Ruth Jones:

[4031]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on her Department's trade priorities for the upcoming G7 summit.

Greg Hands:

The trade priorities for the upcoming G7 leaders' summit are to champion free and fair trade, advance the modernisation of international trade, and support the reform and strengthening of the World Trade Organization. Free and Fair Trade is essential to long-term prosperity and the Government will use its G7 Presidency to unite the G7 to help tackle practices that undermine this. The Government has been engaging with officials from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the upcoming G7 Leaders' Summit, and will continue to do so in the run up to the Summit and throughout the Presidency.

■ **Trade Remedies: Iron and Steel**

Bill Esterson:

[4581]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate's Statement of Intended Final Determination published 19 May 2021, when she plans to respond to the recommendations of the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate on the UK steel industry; and what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of that analysis by representative bodies and trade unions in the UK steel industry.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The independent Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) will be formally established in June and will operate at arms-length from the Department for International Trade. Through its temporary precursor, the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate, it has been engaging with interested parties and others throughout its review of the steel safeguard measure. The review began in October 2020.

The publication of their Statement of Intended Preliminary Decision on 19th May provides an opportunity for domestic producers and others to comment on their findings before they make a recommendation to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade.

When a recommendation is received, the Secretary of State may only accept or reject it, and cannot amend the details of the TRA's recommendation. Under the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018, the Secretary of State does not have powers to impose measures unless the TRA provides a recommendation to do so, which she may then accept.

We still expect that the review will conclude before the safeguard measure is due to expire at the end of June. The Secretary of State, fellow Ministers and I continue to engage with the industry and others.

JUSTICE■ **Courts: Video Conferencing**

Alex Cunningham: [\[4599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of defendants who appear in video-linked first court hearings from police custody (a) plead guilty, (b) plead not guilty and (c) are arrested on warrant.

Chris Philp:

The information requested could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ **Legal Profession: Recruitment**

Sally-Ann Hart: [\[2488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of whether the recruitment of more legal advisers will assist the covid-19 recovery in the courts system; and what steps he is taking to ensure that a career as a legal adviser is as attractive as a career in the CPS by correlating pay grades.

Chris Philp:

Legal advisers are an important component of Covid-19 recovery in the courts system, and the recruitment of legal advisers continues to be a priority for HMCTS. Last year 145 trainee legal advisers were recruited following a national campaign, and a further campaign is underway to recruit a minimum of 100 trainee legal advisers by October 2021. Legal adviser pay and grading does not correlate with that of CPS lawyers due to the differing nature of the roles. The Ministry of Justice has submitted a pay flexibility case to invest in changes to our reward framework via a multi-year deal effective from August 2020. The case is currently being considered by the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury, and aims to reduce both operational and financial risks.

TRANSPORT■ **Bus Services and Railways: Bedfordshire**

Sarah Owen: [\[4709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to better integrate the bus and train services in Bedfordshire.

Rachel Maclean:

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail and the National Bus Strategy set out that bus and rail services should be better integrated with each other. Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), which we expect local transport authorities to produce by the end of October, will need to set out ambitious visions for travel by bus, meeting the goals and expectations in the National Bus Strategy.

BSIPs will influence the share of the £3 billion transformation funding that each authority receives, and we will expect to see proposals for modal integration as part of each plan, including how bus and rail operators can increasingly align their services, timetables and network planning.

■ **Bus Services: Bedfordshire**

Sarah Owen:

[4710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with bus companies on reducing the cost of bus tickets in Bedfordshire.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with bus operators; through our engagement we are exploring operators' plans to work with Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to deliver the commitments in the National Bus Strategy. The Strategy sets out that within cities and towns, we want low flat fares (or maximum fares and daily price caps) to be standard practice.

Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), which we expect Local Transport Authorities to produce by the end of October, will need to set out ambitious visions for travel by bus, meeting the goals and expectations in the strategy. BSIPs will influence the share of the £3 billion transformation funding that each authority receives, and we will expect to see fares policy as an integral part of the plans.

In addition, the Department's bus open data service, which will create a single source of information on bus fares in England, provides an opportunity for bus operators to simplify fares structures and potentially move towards flat fares.

■ **Driving Tests**

Bill Wiggin:

[4538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1004, on Driving Tests, when he expects the backlog of practical driving tests to reduce to a level that was acceptable prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

Bill Wiggin:

[4539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1003 on practical driving tests, how many people are on the waiting list for a practical car driving test in (a) England, (b) Herefordshire and (c) North Herefordshire.

Bill Wiggin:

[4540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1001 on practical driving tests, what the average waiting time for a practical driving test was prior to the covid-19 outbreak in (a) England, (b) Herefordshire and (c) North Herefordshire.

Bill Wiggin: [4541]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the timeliness of the next available date to take a practical driving test for (a) car, (b) HGV, (c) motorcycle and (d) tractor in North Herefordshire.

Bill Wiggin: [4542]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the timeliness of the next available date for a practical driving test for a (a) car, (b) HGV, (c) motorcycle and (d) tractor in England.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standard Agency's (DVSA) priority is to keep candidates, examiners and instructors safe. It has measures in place to increase testing capacity as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a COVID-secure service. To help reduce the backlog of driving tests, the DVSA advises candidates to only come to test when ready, and to be flexible in their choice of test centre; a test ready candidate should be capable of passing the test anywhere, not just on roads they are familiar with.

As at 17 May 2021, the number of people on the waiting list for a practical car driving test: (a) England 398,609 (b) Herefordshire (Hereford driving test centre) 812 (c) North Herefordshire (Ludlow driving test centre) 744.

As at 17 May 2021, the average waiting time for a practical driving test: (a) England 14 weeks (b) Herefordshire (Hereford Driving test centre) 10 weeks (c) North Herefordshire (Ludlow driving test centre) 15 weeks.

As at 17 May 2021, the next available date to take a practical driving test in North Herefordshire is: (a) 13 weeks for car (b) 3 weeks for HGV (c) 1 week for motorcycle (no motorcycle provision in North Herefordshire but Worcester, Gloucester and Shrewsbury are all 1 week) (d) 13 weeks for tractor.

As at 17 May 2021, the next available date to take a practical driving test in England is: (a) 13.4 weeks for car (b) 8.6 weeks for HGV (c) 7 weeks for motorcycle (d) 14 weeks for tractor.

■ Driving: Mobile Phones

Tulip Siddiq: [3082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's consultation of October 2020, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen the law on using a mobile phone while operating a vehicle.

Rachel Maclean:

Between October 2020 and January 2021, the Department consulted on a proposal to broaden the offence of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving so that it captures standalone mode functions (such as searching for music stored on the phone) as well as the interactive communication functions that are covered now. We are currently analysing the responses and intend to publish a government response in the summer.

■ Driving: Standards

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[4556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on creating a lifelong learning approach to improve driver behaviour, as identified within The Road Safety Statement, A Lifetime of Road Safety.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes road safety very seriously and, although UK roads continue to be among the safest in the world, we can never afford to be complacent or relax efforts to improve what we do. Following the Road Safety Statement 2019, the Department awarded a research grant to the Driving Instructors Association to devise and trial a modular approach for learning to drive.

The modules for the project were designed last year, however COVID-19 restrictions delayed the start of the trial until this spring. It is anticipated that all participants would have completed their learning by Spring 2022. Six-months of post-test experience data is required to assess the impact of the modular approach. To allow for sufficient time for analysis, as well as quality assurance, and reporting we expect to provide information of the effectiveness of modular learning by Spring 2023.

■ East West Rail

Richard Fuller:

[\[4574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to East West Rail's report entitled 2019 Bedford to Cambridge Route Option Consultation: Public Feedback Report, whether his Department has (a) had discussions with representatives of the East West Rail Company on the provision to the public of data demonstrating the geographic distribution of consultation postcards to postcodes during the 2019 non-statutory consultation into the East West Rail route and (b) plans to require East West Rail Company to release that data.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has had no specific discussions on the provision of this data; however I am aware that East West Rail Company is in the process of removing any personal details to ensure the data complies with data protection regulations, and will publish it on its website once this process is complete.

■ Hitachi Rail: Redundancy Pay

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[4674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department (a) has over the last 12 months or (b) plans to cover redundancy payments for Hitachi Rail UK employees.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

There is provision in the contract for trains operating on London North Eastern Railway for the operator to engage with Hitachi in relation to any potential redundancies but no such discussions have taken place.

■ Hitachi: Trains

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[4672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series trains (a) have been delivered into service and (b) are under order and awaiting delivery.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The number of Class 800 trains that have been delivered into service is 182. This comprises of 93 for Great Western Railway, 19 for TransPennine Express, 65 for London North Eastern Railway and 5 for Hull Trains (open access operator).

There are 61 trains that are under order and awaiting delivery.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[4673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any Hitachi Intercity Class 800 series trains were suffering from cracking in other locations on inspection for cracking at the lifting points.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The cracking that caused trains to be removed from the network was found whilst hairline cracks near the yaw dampers was being investigated.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[4676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure that Hitachi trains newly introduced into service will not be affected by cracking issues.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Hitachi, as the manufacturer and maintainer of the trains, is undertaking a thorough investigation into the causes of the cracking that was found. It is expected that any recommendations from those investigations would be considered across the Hitachi fleet.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: EU Countries

Mike Amesbury: [\[2434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure the uninterrupted haulage travel of goods from the EU.

Rachel Maclean:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) allows EU and UK hauliers to undertake unlimited journeys to, from and through each other's territories with no extra bureaucracy, with a maximum of two additional movements within each other's territories. For EU hauliers, this means they can do up to two cabotage movements in the UK.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Safety

Kerry McCarthy:

[4555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to consult on proposed legislative changes on HGV sideguards.

Rachel Maclean:

Since 2014 vehicle approval regulations require most new Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to be fitted with sideguards.

Work is now focused on amending the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use)

Regulations to ensure that sideguards required when the vehicle is new are retained and maintained throughout the life of the vehicle. The consultation on the amending regulation is expected to take place this summer.

■ Motorcycles: Registration

Nick Fletcher:

[3198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the potential merits of making the DVLA's off-road registration scheme mandatory for off road motorcycle users and (b) whether that scheme could be made mandatory with no cost to users.

Rachel Maclean:

There is no legal requirement for vehicles that are used off-road to be registered. In 1994 the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency introduced a voluntary scheme to register 'off-road' motorcycles. This scheme was extended in 1996 to include all mechanically propelled vehicles which are used off-road. The details of vehicles registered under this scheme are held on the DVLA's database and on the Police National Computer.

There are no plans to make the registration of vehicles that are only used off-road mandatory.

■ Railways: Electrification

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[2400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 176011 on Railways: Electrification, if he will publish the scheme by scheme data on electrification projects in an accessible format.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail arranges for the publication of data related to electrification schemes on their website. Network Rail provides a contact point to enable users to request information in an accessible format. Network Rail's accessibility policy can be found here: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/accessibility/>

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[3105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Questions 178610, 178612, 178613, 178616, 178618, 178621, whether he will publish this scheme by scheme data in accessible formats.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail arranges for the publication of data related to electrification schemes on its website. Network Rail provides a contact point to enable users to request information in an accessible format. Network Rail's accessibility policy can be found here: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/accessibility/>

■ Railways: Livestock

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[2401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that farm animals cannot encroach on the UK rail network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail, in its role as national rail infrastructure manager, has the main responsibility for preventing animals from encroaching on the rail network as part of its wider rail safety duties. It uses fences to mark the boundary of its land and to prevent unauthorised intrusions, which are checked regularly. Members of the public are encouraged to contact Network Rail if they notice fencing that is showing signs of fatigue or is unsuitable, so that Network Rail can investigate and take action, which may include repairing or replacing the affected fencing. Additionally, Network Rail will investigate any incursion by livestock onto the network and carry out the work needed to reduce the risk of encroachment happening again.

■ Road Traffic: Death and Injuries

Kerry McCarthy:

[4554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made towards the UK meeting the UN target of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50 per cent by 2030.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes road safety very seriously and supports the aims of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution to launch a second decade of action and to prevent 50 percent of road traffic deaths and injuries.

There were 1,752 road deaths in Great Britain in accidents reported by the police in 2019, 2% lower than the previous year and down 21% compared to 2009. There were a total of 153,158 road casualties (deaths and injuries). This was 5% lower than the previous year and 31% lower than the 2009 figure.

Out of 32 countries reporting data to the European Transport Safety Council's Performance index, Great Britain had the fourth lowest number of road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019.

Provisional figures for Great Britain for 2020 will be published in June.

■ Roads: Safety

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[4557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on moving to an integrated approach to road safety, as identified in The Road Safety Statement, A Lifetime of Road Safety.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes road safety very seriously and while UK roads continue to be among the safest in the world, we can never afford to be complacent or relax efforts to improve what we do.

The Road Safety Statement, 'A Lifetime of Road Safety' published in July 2019, included over 70 actions that will contribute towards safer road use for everyone; from drivers and motorcyclists, to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Over half of these actions have now completed and the majority of the remaining are underway, and we are making good progress with them. We will be providing an update to the Road Safety Statement later on this year and this will include the next steps on integrated approach to road safety.

■ Shipping: Coronavirus

Peter Dowd:

[\[2323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support maritime small and medium-sized enterprises recover from the outbreak of covid-19.

Robert Courts:

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government's priority has been to support businesses and employees. Our financial measures worth an initial £330 billion have been continually refined to support all parts of the economy, including maritime small and medium-sized enterprises. The Government has provided financial support to a range of small and medium-sized enterprises, including making available up to £22.4 million to safeguard lifeline services. As we move towards recovery, we remain committed to safeguarding livelihoods with the Chancellor extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme from April to September 2021.

My officials are also working with the sector on a longer-term Maritime Recovery Plan which will support the Maritime 2050 strategy launched by the Government in 2019. The Department is working closely with representatives from across the maritime sector to identify their priorities and develop interventions which can support the sector's recovery.

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions**Peter Dowd:** [\[2326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of reducing maritime emissions on air quality.

Robert Courts:

In support of the 2019 Clean Maritime Plan the Department commissioned extensive research into emissions from the maritime sector covering both air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

The research examined emissions from both international and domestic shipping, and includes detailed analysis of a series of emissions scenarios out to 2050. The research package has been published on Gov.UK.

■ Trains: Hitachi**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[2409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of (a) the cost to the public purse to date including lost revenue and (b) the final cost to the public purse of the cracking within Hitachi Intercity Class 800 series trains.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[2414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much money from the public purse has been spent on Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

122 Hitachi Series 800 trains were procured under the Government's Intercity Express Programme. This was a £5.6bn public private partnership that was signed between the Department and Agility/Hitachi.

Disruption has been most significant on the Great Western Railway (GWR) network on intercity services, as well as some London North Eastern Railway (LNER) and a small number of TransPennine Express services.

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

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[2410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many of Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series trains were found to be (a) affected and (b) unaffected by cracks.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[2411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many of Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series trains were found to have failings in three or more joints; and how many of those trains have (a) been repaired and (b) remain affected.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The mitigations put in place on 13 May mean that these trains are monitored more frequently and intrusively. If any issues are found, then trains are withdrawn for further checks. These mitigations were created by Hitachi, and then independently verified, and train operators conducted their own risk assessments against these mitigations. All of this was overseen by the independent regulator.

This is a live operational issue and the numbers affected and unaffected by cracks change every day. However, no trains are put into service if they do not meet the mitigations put in place. The mitigations have been signed off by all parties involved and overseen by inspectors from the independent Office of Rail and Road.

Travel: Coronavirus**Sarah Owen:**[\[4708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to subsidise the cost of PCR testing for people leaving and entering the UK.

Robert Courts:

We are working with the travel industry and private testing providers to see how we can further reduce costs for the British public while ensuring travel is as safe as possible. We are considering a range of options including cheaper tests being used when passengers return home. The price of tests has reduced significantly in recent weeks, with providers offering testing packages for green arrivals starting at £20.

TREASURY**Income Tax: Divers****Alex Cunningham:**[\[4598\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he last discussed with HMRC the tax codes for income earned by commercial divers in the (a) inshore and (b) offshore sectors.

Jesse Norman:

All parts of the tax system are kept under review. It would be inappropriate to divulge specific topics of conversation between Ministers and officials.

International Military Services: Iran**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[4643\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason his Department has not made a decision on the 2017 licence application to pay the International Military Services Limited debt to the Central Bank of Iran.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[4644\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what risk assessment his Department has made of the time taken for a decision on the 2017 licence to pay the International Military Services Limited debt to Iran.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[4645\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the lifting of US sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran on the ability of payments to be made by the UK Government to the Central Bank of Iran.

John Glen:

As the competent authority for the implementation of financial sanctions, the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), part of HM Treasury, ensures financial sanctions are properly understood and enforced.

If an activity prohibited by financial sanctions falls within licensing grounds set out in the applicable legislation OFSI considers the relevant evidence, on a case by case basis, before deciding whether to grant a licence. Licences are granted in strict adherence to the applicable law.

OFSI does not, however, comment on individual licence applications. Where a licence has been issued by OFSI, it does not compel any party to take any action.

The Government monitors developments in international sanctions. However, it would not be appropriate to speculate on developments in relation to a particular designation.

■ Landfill Tax

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4544\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 77 on Stamp Duty Land Tax: Fraud, whether the Minister was referring to landfill tax fraud, not land tax fraud, in his answer.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4545\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many companies pay landfill tax in the UK as at 20 May 2021.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4546\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many investigators are looking into the issue of landfill tax fraud as at 20 May 2021.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4547\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what is HMRC's policy on commenting on ongoing landfill tax fraud investigations.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4548\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many hon. Members had meetings with HMRC on its investigation into the suspected systematic abuse of the landfill tax system, referred to as Operation Nosedive.

Jesse Norman:

The response provided related to landfill tax fraud.

Two Honourable Members have met with HMRC on their investigation into the suspected systematic abuse of the landfill tax system, referred to as Operation Nosedive.

Landfill Tax is a devolved tax. 125 companies pay Landfill Tax to HMRC in relation to landfill sites in England. 16 companies pay Landfill Disposal Tax to the Welsh Revenue Authority, along with 1 City Council. 28 companies pay the Scottish Landfill Tax (SLT) to Revenue Scotland, along with 7 Unitary Authorities and 1 Public Body.

As at 20 May 2021 there are approximately 48 HMRC investigators working on landfill tax compliance. Of this number approximately 10 HMRC investigators are looking into the issue of landfill tax fraud.

HMRC have a statutory duty of confidentiality to protect information held about taxpayers, so that such information is not passed to unauthorised parties. HMRC's ability to disclose information held about taxpayers is restricted by the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005 (CRCA). Section 18 of CRCA makes clear that HMRC must not disclose information to anyone, unless they have lawful authority to do so.

■ Legal Profession: Technology

Elliot Colburn:

[3170]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing incentives such as tax credits to encourage rapid adoption of new technologies in the legal services sector.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government regularly receives proposals for sector specific tax reliefs. When considering any new tax reliefs, HM Treasury must ensure they provide support to businesses across the economy in a fair way and effectively target taxpayer money.

At the Budget, the Chancellor announced the Help to Grow programme to support over 100k SMEs across the UK improve their productivity and performance through management training and digital adoption. This includes Help to Grow: Digital, comprising free online advice and a discount on software that could help SMEs from all sectors and across the UK save time and cut costs.

The Help to Grow: Digital platform will help businesses to understand the benefits of different types of software and identify which could help deliver their business goals. Support will be provided through interactive tools and technology-specific guides. Through the platform, eligible businesses will be able to access a voucher providing up to 50% discount on the costs of buying new software, worth up to £5,000 a year per business. Vouchers are expected to be available for software that helps businesses: build customer relationships and increase sales; make the most of selling online; and manage their accounts and finances digitally.

■ Offshore Industry: Off-payroll Working

Alex Cunningham: [4596]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of the introduction of IR35 on the employment (a) status and (b) rights of offshore energy workers in the (i) oil and gas and (ii) renewables sector.

Alex Cunningham: [4597]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy objectives are in extending IR35 to offshore energy workers in the (a) oil and gas and (b) renewables sector.

Jesse Norman:

The off-payroll working rules (commonly known as IR35) have been in place for over twenty years and are designed to ensure that individuals working like employees but through their own company, usually a personal service company (PSC), pay broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) as those who are directly employed.

However, non-compliance with these rules was widespread. It is estimated that this non-compliance in the private and voluntary sectors would cost the Exchequer £1.3 billion per year by 2023/24 if not addressed, denying the taxpayer significant funding for public services. This is not a new tax; the reform will improve compliance with existing rules by moving the responsibility for determining whether the off-payroll working rules apply from the individual's company to the client engaging them.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published at Spring Budget 2021 sets out that nationally, the reform of the off-payroll working rules is expected to affect about 180,000 individuals across all sectors outside the public sector who are working through their own companies, and who would be employed if engaged directly. No specific assessment has been made of the potential impact on offshore energy workers.

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>.

Falling within the off-payroll working tax rules does not change an individual's status for employment rights; there are separate legal frameworks for determining employment status for tax and for rights, with no direct link between the two.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Appeals

Liz Saville Roberts: [4646]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a right to appeal for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant decisions.

Jesse Norman:

The Government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth

grant. This provides certainty to business as the economy reopens and means the SEISS will continue to be one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

There is no legal right to appeal either eligibility for a SEISS grant or the amount of the grant. These decisions are based on information from tax returns provided to HMRC by the self-employed. Anyone who believes that information is wrong can ask HMRC to review the position. If someone was eligible for earlier SEISS grants (SEISS 1-3) but has not been invited to claim the fourth grant, they can access the SEISS service to find out why they are considered ineligible for the fourth SEISS grant, and again can ask HMRC to review this decision

Individuals asking for a review need to tell HMRC the reason for the request and be prepared to provide evidence where necessary.

■ Social Services: Finance

Zarah Sultana:

[\[4720\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the next Comprehensive Spending Review delivers sustainable funding to adult social care.

Steve Barclay:

At SR20, we announced we are providing councils with access to over £1bn to fund social care this year. This includes £300m of new grant funding for social care, on top of the £1bn Social Care grant announced last financial year which is being maintained in line with the government's manifesto commitment. This will support local authorities to maintain care services while keeping up with rising demand and recovering from the impact of COVID-19.

Decisions on Local Government spending beyond 2021-22 will be taken as part of the next Spending Review. Further details about the Spending Review will be set out in due course.

■ VAT

Paul Bristow:

[\[2469\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how his Department works with HMRC to help ensure that VAT rulings are equitable to all stakeholders; and whether his Department monitors the appeals process of those decisions.

Jesse Norman:

HM Treasury has no statutory authority over the application of VAT rulings or the appeals process of those decisions; this is wholly within the remit of HM Revenue and Customs. HM Revenue and Customs apply the law objectively to ensure that businesses apply the tax rules correctly.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Lone Parents: Discrimination

Marsha De Cordova: [2443]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment she has made of levels of discrimination experienced by single parents; and what steps she is taking to tackle any such discrimination.

Kemi Badenoch:

We are clear that the Equality Act 2010, which provides protection against direct and indirect discrimination across a range of fields, including employment, service provision and housing, already offers some protection for single parents.

Given that significantly more women than men, and disproportionately more members of particular ethnic groups, have single parent responsibilities, employers in particular must ensure that their rules and practices which may affect single parents do not indirectly discriminate on grounds of sex or race. We continue to keep the effectiveness of the Act under review.

■ Racial Discrimination: Technology

Chi Onwurah: [3857]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to her oral contribution of 24 March 2021, Official Report, column 907, if she will publish the research conducted by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities referred to in that answer; and what steps she is taking to prevent structural racism from being further entrenched by new technologies.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published its findings on 31 March 2021 and its report is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The Employment and Enterprise chapter of the report includes the Commission's research about Artificial Intelligence systems and bias in technology.

The Commission has recommended that Government issue guidance that clarifies how to apply the Equality Act to algorithmic decision-making and require transparency for public sector bodies when such is applied to decision making concerning individuals. The Government is now considering the Commission's recommendations in detail and will respond in full this summer.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Maintenance

Munira Wilson: [4706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment has she made of the potential merits of (a) removing or (b) reducing the 25 per cent threshold for in-year

reviews for child maintenance payments that would allow the paying parent to request a review as soon as changes in their income make the existing level of payment unaffordable.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) keeps all policies and procedures under review. However, it remains the case that the 25 per cent threshold ensures that both parents can continue to budget with certainty, and therefore provide ongoing certainty for the child. Most people's income does not change to this degree over the course of one year. It also ensures that minor changes in income do not interfere with the efficiency of the child maintenance system, increasing costs for the taxpayer. A change will not be considered unless it breaches the 25 per cent threshold.

■ **Children: Poverty**

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[4530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the level of child poverty in Newcastle East constituency in each of the last five years.

Will Quince:

The Department publishes official statistics on the number of children in low income families at constituency level, including Newcastle East. Children in Low Income Families data is published annually. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020>

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[4531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the planned reduction in universal credit from October 2021 on child poverty in (a) Newcastle East constituency and (b) the UK.

Will Quince:

No such assessment has been made.

This Government has long championed the principle of work as the best route out of poverty and towards financial independence. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

Getting people back to work and supporting them to progress is therefore at the heart of our approach to tackling poverty and building back better. Our Plan for Jobs is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country and includes investing over £7 billion on new schemes such as the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, the Restart Scheme and our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[4532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Child Poverty Action Group's 2021 Budget Representation, what assessment she has made of the

potential effect of the real terms reduction in child benefit since 2010 on child poverty in (a) Newcastle East constituency and (b) the UK.

Will Quince:

No such assessment has been made.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures, including a temporary increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance of £20 per week

National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication. Data for Newcastle East is unavailable due to insufficient sample size, however, data for the North East region is available.

The latest figures on the number of children who are in low income in the North East, and in the UK, covering up to 2019/20, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020>, "children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2019-20-tables" in table 4.16ts (relative low income, before and after housing costs) and in table 4.22ts (absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

Across the UK, there were 100,000 fewer children in absolute low income, before housing costs in 2019/20 than in 2009/10.

The Department now publishes supplementary official statistics on the number of children in low income families at constituency level, including Newcastle East. Children in Low Income Families data is published annually.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020>

Mr Nicholas Brown: [4533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce child poverty in working households.

Mr Nicholas Brown: [4534]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what fiscal steps his Department is taking to reduce child poverty in Newcastle East constituency.

Will Quince:

This Government is wholly committed to tackling child poverty. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to protect family incomes by spending £407 billion to protect jobs, keep businesses afloat and help families get by. This includes 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. Our Covid Winter Grant Scheme has provided £229m to Local Authorities in England to enable them to support people with food and

essential utility bills during the coldest months. Building on this, we have now introduced the £40m Covid Local Support Grant which will run to the 20th June. For Newcastle upon Tyne District Council this means funding of £1,817,131.52.

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. The In-Work Progression Commission will report this year on the barriers to progression for those in persistent low pay and set out a strategy for overcoming these.

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. We have fulfilled our commitment to recruit 13,500 extra Work Coaches who through our Jobcentre network will provide people with the tailored support they need to move into work.

■ Disability: Poverty

Gill Furniss:

[4652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the finding in the report by the Trussell Trust entitled *The State of Hunger*, published in 2019, that 62 per cent of food bank users were disabled, what steps she is taking to reduce poverty among disabled people.

Will Quince:

This Government is wholly committed to tackling poverty. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to support the most vulnerable including through spending an additional £7.4billion to strengthen the welfare system, taking our total expenditure on welfare support for people of working age to an estimated £112 billion in 2020/21. In December 2020 we introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme providing funding to Local Authorities in England to enable them to support people with food and essential utility bills during the coldest months. It will now run to the 20th June as the Covid Local Support Grant, with a total investment of £269m.

We will spend over £57 billion during 2021/22 on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions, including but not limited to new style Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment. Benefits to meet the additional costs of disability were excluded from the benefit freeze which was in place from 2016 to 2020 and during that period were uprated in line with prices.

There is clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. The Government recognises the important economic contribution of disabled people in the labour market and in 2017 we set a goal to see one million more disabled people in work by 2027. DWP delivers a range of programmes to support disabled people, to stay in or move into work. These include the Work and Health Programme, Intensive Personalised Employment Support, Access to Work, Disability Confident and initiatives in

partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services and Individual Placement and Support.

■ Disadvantaged

Rachael Maskell:

[2369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure people living in deprivation in areas of affluence are effectively supported.

Will Quince:

A strong welfare safety net is available to support those who need it wherever they live. This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

We also introduced the Covid Winter Grant and Covid Local Support Grant, together totalling £269m administered by local authorities in England to help the most vulnerable children and families stay warm and well fed. For the City of York Council this means funding of £659,658.66.

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance rates were boosted by almost £1 billion providing 1.5 million people with an average increase of £600 over the year. In some areas the increase was higher for example in York the 2-bedroom rate rose by over £1300 for the year.

■ Food Poverty

Gill Furniss:

[4653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to reduce food insecurity.

Will Quince:

This Government is wholly committed to tackling poverty in all its forms. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to protect incomes by spending £407 billion last year to protect jobs, keep businesses afloat and help families get by. This includes spending an additional £7.4 billion 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 £112 billion in 2020/21. In December 2020 we introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme providing funding to Local Authorities in England to enable them to support people with food and essential utility bills during the coldest months. It will now run until June as the Covid Local Support Grant, with a total investment of £269m.

The Department for Work and Pensions has recently published new data from the Family Resources Survey on household food security, giving us a better understanding of who is most at risk and underlining how seriously we take the issue of food insecurity. The new data shows that 92% of households are food secure.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help people move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. Our Plan for Jobs is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country and includes investing over £7 billion on new schemes such as the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, the Restart Scheme and our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme.

■ Occupational Health

Jonathan Reynolds:

[4594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to publish its response to the consultation document, Health is everyone's business: proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss, which closed on 7 October 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government remains committed to supporting disabled people and those with health conditions to thrive at work. We anticipate that a response will be available shortly.

■ Poverty: York

Rachael Maskell:

[2368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the levels of (a) poverty and (b) child poverty in York.

Will Quince:

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

We also introduced the Covid Winter Grant and Covid Local Support Grant, together totalling £269m administered by local authorities in England to help the most vulnerable children and families stay warm and well fed. For the City of York Council this means funding of £659,659.

National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication. Data for York is unavailable due to insufficient sample size, however, data for the Yorkshire and Humber region is available.

Latest statistics for the levels of low income for people in Yorkshire and the Humber can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>, "population-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2019-20-tables" in table 3.17ts (relative low income, before and after housing costs) and in table 3.19ts (absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

Latest statistics for the levels of low income for children in Yorkshire and the Humber can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>.

[income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020](#), "children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2019-20-tables" in table 4.16ts (relative low income, before and after housing costs) and in table 4.22ts (absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

■ Restart Programme

Jonathan Reynolds:

[4595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether disabled people claiming employment support allowance will be eligible for support under her Department's Restart scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Restart Scheme is a large-scale, tailored employment support offer for those who have been unemployed for longer periods, helping people affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 back into sustained work.

The Restart Scheme will be open to Universal Credit claimants, including disabled people, who have been unemployed for between 12 to 18 months and are expected to look for and be available for work, but have no sustained earnings. There will also be an opportunity for discretionary referrals for other Universal Credit claimants at the appropriate time based on individual claimant and Work Coach discussions.

For disabled people, including those on Employment Support Allowance, who require more intensive employment support would also have access to both the Work and Health Programme (WHP) and Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) and can volunteer for this support at any time. The WHP predominantly helps people with a wide range of disabilities and health conditions to enter into and stay in work, using the expertise of private, public and voluntary, and community sector providers. IPES is an intensive, highly personalised voluntary support package that is flexible to participants' needs

■ Social Security Benefits: Domestic Abuse

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:

[2399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of making it a purpose of the benefit system to (a) protect and (b) support women and children who need to leave their homes to stay safe.

Will Quince:

The benefit system acts as a safety net for people who find themselves in need of financial support with living and housing costs for a variety of reasons.

A range of Universal Credit measures are designed to support victims of domestic abuse, including special provisions for temporary accommodation, easements from work-related requirements and signposting to expert third-party services.

DWP also has a number of employment schemes that claimants, including victims of abuse, can access. The Work and Health Programme gives voluntary priority early

access to victims of abuse. This programme supports people to enter and stay in work, and involves referrals to public, private and voluntary providers.

Government departments are working together to look at the overall support we provide for victims and to ensure that it effectively fulfils their needs, so that victims can rebuild their lives.

Alongside the landmark Domestic Abuse Act, the Government is providing £35 million to combat domestic abuse. This is on top of the £2 million we have already made available since the Covid-19 crisis, to support domestic abuse charities and raise awareness of the support available. We are also providing £3 million that will go to specialist services for children who have both been directly and indirectly affected by domestic abuse.

■ Social Security Benefits: Lone Parents

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[2444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure equity of treatment for lone parents in the administration of (a) child benefit payments, (b) national insurance contributions, (c) carers' allowance and (b) other social security system matters.

Will Quince:

(a) Entitlement to Child Benefit is dependent on a person making a claim for it and is payable to a person responsible for the child or qualifying young. All claimants are treated equally within the administration of Child Benefit, with the exception that payments can be made weekly rather than four-weekly for lone parents.

(b) The amount of NICs payable is dependent on the person's earnings and there is no difference in this regard between lone parents and non-lone parents.

(c) The primary purpose of Carer's Allowance is to provide a measure of financial support and recognition for people who give up the opportunity of full-time employment in order to provide regular and substantial care for a severely disabled person. All carers are treated equally within the administration of Carer's Allowance.

(d) Under Universal Credit (UC), comprehensive support is provided to lone parents. There is help available for childcare costs for children of any age. Claimants can recover up to 85% of their eligible childcare costs through UC (or 70% of those costs through working tax credits). Further assistance may be available through the Flexible Support Fund. Jobcentre Plus staff can help parents to find work that fits around childcare responsibilities and provide intensive support to lone parents. UC is designed to make work pay, so not all of a person's net earnings are deducted from UC. Claimants with children and/or disabilities will benefit from a work allowance which means they can keep either: £293 per month if they also receive housing costs element, or £515 per month if they don't receive any housing costs element.

■ Welfare Assistance Schemes**Fabian Hamilton:****[2198]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that people receive support from local welfare assistance schemes when necessary.

Will Quince:

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age and children in 2020/21 including around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures. In December 2020 we introduced the Covid Winter Grant to help the most vulnerable children and families stay warm and well fed. Recognising that some restrictions on the economy are still in place we have created the Covid Local Support Grant which will run until June, with a total investment of £269m.

Covid Local Support Grant is ring-fenced with at least 80% targeted to assist with food and bills, and at least 80% for families with children. Within these parameters, Local Authorities have discretion to decide how to allocate Government funding in their areas, recognising that they are best placed to understand local needs and they have shown how they are able to respond at pace to put innovative measures in place to support vulnerable households.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Launch of Research Collaboration Advice Team

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Science, Research and Innovation) (Amanda Solloway):

[\[HCWS53\]](#)

The Integrated Review sets an ambition for the UK to be a science and technology superpower by 2030. International research collaboration will be central to achieving this objective, and our research sector needs to be both open and secure

The Government works with research institutions, funding bodies and industry to ensure national security risks are understood and responded to appropriately. I and the Secretary of State for BEIS, as well as our officials, have discussed these issues at all levels within the research community. We expect institutions and individuals to make sure international collaboration is safe, sustainable and secure

I am therefore pleased to announce that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will this year launch the Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT). The new unit will provide an efficient route by which researchers can access advice, as well as seek confidential consultation on sensitive and emerging issues. Its leadership will operate from Manchester and advisers will be distributed across the UK, available to researchers from across the country. Advisers' responsibilities will be limited to guidance, and they will not have enforcement responsibilities

The RCAT will be a BEIS unit, but its advisers will work closely with officials in the Departments for Education, International Trade and Defence, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the National Technical Authorities. This initiative complements a number of measures already in place to manage risk within international collaboration, including:

- guidelines published by Universities UK, on behalf of the sector and with government support, to help universities to tackle security risks related to international collaboration;
- the Trusted Research campaign, run by National Cyber Security Centre and Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure in partnership with BEIS and the Cabinet Office;
- one of the toughest export controls regimes in the world, including guidance recently published by the Department for International Trade specifically for academics;
- the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's Academic Technology Approvals Scheme, a pre-visa screening regime expanded to cover a wider set of technologies and all researchers in proliferation sensitive fields;

- guidance from the Intellectual Property Office on protecting Intellectual Property known as the Lambert Toolkit; and
- our work with partners and allies, including the G7, to create international frameworks that support open, secure science collaborations.

My Department is working hard to promote research collaboration, putting science and technology at the heart of our international partnerships. As a package, these measures are enabling this effort by making sure collaboration is safe, sustainable and secure.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Public Consultation on the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 Statutory Guidance

Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health) (Ms Nadine Dorries): [\[HCWS55\]](#)

Today, I am pleased to announce the launch of the Government's consultation on the statutory guidance for the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018.

The Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018, also known as Seni's Law, was introduced into the House of Commons by the Honourable Member for Croydon North in July 2017 and received Royal Assent in November 2018. The Act is named after Mr Olaseni Lewis, who died as a result of being forcibly restrained whilst he was a voluntary patient in a mental health unit.

The purpose of the Act is to clearly set out the measures which are needed to both prevent the use of force and then ensure accountability and transparency about the use of force in mental health units. By promoting good practice, identifying poor practice, and through a greater understanding of where there are problems or issues for specific groups, we can address this nationally as well as locally. The statutory guidance sets out how we expect mental health units to meet the requirements of the Act. This consultation will seek views on the clarity, content and approach of the proposed guidance.

This is vitally important to minimise restrictive interventions in mental health units which affected 12,000 individuals in 2019/20, and disproportionately those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

This is a landmark piece of legislation which enjoys the support of patients, people with lived experience, voluntary and charitable sector organisations and the NHS. Today's launch represents a significant step forward in our efforts to prevent the use of force in mental health units which would not have been possible without the tireless campaigning of the Honourable Member for Croydon North and the Lewis family.

This consultation is part of the Government's wider reform agenda to improve support for individuals with severe mental illnesses. The Government published its Mental Health Act White Paper on 13 January 2021 which sets out proposals for once in a generation reforms to the Mental Health Act, responding to and building on Sir Simon Wessely's Review of the Act. We are also working hard to achieve our NHS Long Term plan

commitment to give 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses greater choice and control over their care and support them to live well in their communities by 2023/24.

The consultation will conclude on 17th August 2021. The Government's intention is to publish the final statutory guidance and begin commencement of the Act in November 2021.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ United Kingdom-India Free Trade Agreement Consultation Launch

Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):

[\[HCWS52\]](#)

This morning, the Department for International Trade launched a public consultation on a future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India. This consultation will make sure that the public, business, civil society and trade unions across our nation, can have their say on Government's approach to a future trade agreement with India. As with all consultations, my Department and I will continue to engage Parliament and the Devolved Administrations throughout the scoping of an FTA with India. Today's announcement is consistent with the Government's approach of consulting widely ahead of launching trade negotiations, to ensure our position is tailored to the UK economy and supports our national interest.

India, as the world's largest democracy, enjoys many shared values with the United Kingdom, as well as strong cultural links. It is expected to become the second biggest economy in the world by the mid-2030s, presenting significant trade and investment opportunities as a key partner for us in the increasingly important Indo-Pacific region. On 4 May 2021, the Prime Minister launched the United Kingdom-India Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) with Prime Minister Modi of India as part of the '2030 Roadmap' between the two countries, which includes a declaration of our shared intent to begin work towards a comprehensive FTA. A future comprehensive deal could provide opportunities for businesses across the United Kingdom in key sectors of mutual interest such as healthcare, technology and services. It would boost an already strong economic relationship too; bilateral trade more than doubled between 2007 and 2019, standing at around £23bn at the end of this period, and the bilateral investment relationship currently supports nearly half a million jobs across both countries. As in all negotiations, we remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, product and food safety, and animal welfare standards in any trade agreement with India, as well as protecting the National Health Service (NHS).

The online consultation opens today on GOV.UK and will be live for 14 weeks. It will be accompanied by an information note that sets out the definition and scope of an FTA, along with detailed analytical information on the United Kingdom's current trade and investment relationship with India. Government aims to complete scoping before the end of this year, with the results informing our approach to full FTA negotiations.

TRANSPORT

■ Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme - Financial Assistance to the Aviation Industry

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts): [[HCWS54](#)]

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of hon. Members to bring to their attention spend under the *Industrial Development Act* 1982 (“the Act”).

On 24 November the Government announced the introduction of the Airport and Ground Operators Support Scheme (the Scheme) with the intention of supporting airports and ground handlers who have experienced the impact of COVID-19 on their business whilst maintaining high levels of fixed costs during the 2020/21 financial year. The aim was to open the Scheme in January and ensure grant payments were made to eligible businesses by the end of the financial year. Grant payments would be made using powers in sections 7 and 8 of the Act.

Section 8(8) of the Act states that financial assistance for any one project shall not exceed £30m, except so far as such excess has been authorised by a resolution of the House of Commons. The need to act and ensure that support was provided promptly meant that the Government were previously unable to seek such authorisation from the House of Commons.

Section 8(9) of the Act provides that the Secretary of State shall lay a statement concerning the financial assistance before each House of Parliament if they are satisfied that the payment or undertaking to pay financial assistance in excess of £30m was urgently needed and it would have been impracticable to obtain the approval of the Commons House of Parliament by way of a resolution.

The need to provide urgent support to airports and ground handlers who play a vital role in the infrastructure of the country made it impracticable to seek authorisation by way of a resolution, for payments under the scheme in excess of £30m and I am therefore tabling this statement. The details of the spend on the Scheme, which opened for applications at the end of January, are set out below:

TOTAL OF SCHEME GRANTS	COMMERCIAL AIRPORTS	GROUND HANDLING OPERATORS
£86,925,171.00	£65,075,462.00	£21,849,709

The Government remains committed to supporting the sector and has recently announced that the Scheme will be renewed for the first six months of the financial year 2021/22. Consent for the use of powers in sections 7 and 8 of the Act for the renewed Scheme will be sought separately.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Third quarterly report on progress to address COVID-19 health inequalities

Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch):

[\[HCWS56\]](#)

I am publishing today the third of my quarterly reports to the Prime Minister on progress to address COVID-19 health disparities among ethnic minority groups.

Vaccination offers the clearest path out of the pandemic and remains the key step in addressing the disparities in risks and outcomes from COVID-19. My report summarises the unprecedented programme of measures taken to tackle misinformation and to increase both vaccine confidence and uptake among ethnic minorities.

Over the last quarter the government, together with national and local partners, has responded quickly, effectively and flexibly to drive vaccine uptake. Measures include:

- A bespoke plan for vaccinations during Ramadan, including the use of 'twilight jabbing';
- Establishing vaccination centres at around 50 different religious venues, with many more acting as pop-up sites, to build trust and confidence within local communities;
- Piloting family vaccinations with a view to encourage uptake among multi-generational households, where the risk of infection may be higher;
- Allocating over £7 million of additional NHS funding to local sustainability and transformation partnerships to enable targeted engagement in areas with health inequalities and with communities that are not vaccine confident; and
- Providing local health leaders with comprehensive data on vaccine uptake among those most at risk from COVID-19, allowing them to take targeted action.

My report also sets out progress with the Community Champions scheme, which was launched in January. The 60 local authority areas participating in the government-funded scheme recruited 4,653 individual Community Champions by the end of March, who are now playing a vital role in combatting misinformation and driving vaccine uptake.

These combined efforts have led to increases in both positive vaccine sentiment and vaccine uptake across all ethnic groups over the last quarter. Vaccine confidence has increased in three consecutive research periods and the vast majority of people say they have already been vaccinated, or would be likely to accept a vaccine.

The government is not complacent. The relatively low uptake rates for some ethnic groups and emerging new variants remain areas of concern. The government will continue to encourage everyone to take the vaccine when offered.

My report sets out a number of next steps, including improving our understanding of how the pandemic has impacted frontline healthcare workers, investigating any practical barriers to vaccine uptake by ethnicity, and improving the quality of ethnicity data in health records.

My fourth and final report will provide a further update and will include recommendations on how this work to address COVID-19 disparities should be taken forward, as part of our longer-term strategy to tackle health inequalities.