



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 May 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:35 P.M., 28 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:** [3903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a list of UK companies who participate in the UK-China Green Finance Centre.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

UK-China Green Finance Centre Partners can be found on the UK China Green Finance Centre website: <https://www.ukchinagreen.org/about-us/partners/>

**Peter Dowd:** [3908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many UK companies currently have joint-partnerships with Chinese companies as part of their operations in China.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Government does not hold this information, which is an independent commercial matter for the companies involved.

As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK will continue to pursue a positive trade and investment relationship with China, while ensuring our national security and values are protected.

**Peter Dowd:** [3909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many UK companies are currently involved in providing financing to China's One Belt One Road Initiative.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The provision of all financial services is an independent commercial decision. The Government does not monitor individual companies' activities.

As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK will continue to pursue a positive trade and investment relationship with China, while ensuring our national security and values are protected.

#### ■ Flexible Working

**Kirsten Oswald:** [3917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the Government is making on bringing forward (a) legislative proposals for an Employment Bill and (b) proposals for a consultation on flexible working.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[3918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will urgently review the requirement that employees are only permitted to request the right to work flexibly after they have served a 26-week period in post.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[3919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a right to flexible working from day one of employment.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[3920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make flexible working the default employment status for all employees.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[3921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to prevent firms from revoking an employee's right to work flexibly other than in exceptional circumstances.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government is committed to bringing forward an Employment Bill when Parliamentary time allows, to protect and enhance worker's rights as we build back better from the pandemic.

Given the profound effects the pandemic is having on the economy and on the labour market, the Government has taken unprecedented but necessary steps to support business and protect jobs and will continue to do so.

In 2019 the Government committed to encourage flexible working and consult on making it the default unless employers have good reasons not to. The consultation will happen in due course.

## ■ Flexible Working: Pilot Schemes

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[3922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to incentivise employers in a range of sectors to develop flexible working pilot programmes.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[3923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding he has allocated to support employers to conduct pilot programmes on flexible working.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government is committed to supporting employers with their flexible working practices across all sectors of the economy. While we do not currently fund flexible working pilot programmes, we are providing employers with the support they need to

make informed decisions on their future approach to flexible working. Through reconvening the Flexible Working Taskforce – a partnership across business groups, trade unions, charities, and government departments – we are bringing together the necessary expertise to provide this support.

The Taskforce has been asked to help take forward the best of what we have learned through the pandemic about more flexible ways of working as the economy starts to fully open up. In the immediate phase, the Taskforce will consider the essential practical and legal issues associated with a return to a workplace and an increase in hybrid working.

The Taskforce will move on to provide wider advice on best practice, so that employers are better able to support all forms of flexible working – whether the flexibility relates to the amount, timing or location of work.

### ■ **Forced Labour: Xinjiang**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[3837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the extent to which materials being bought and sold in the UK are via labour from people held in the camps of Xinjiang, China; and if he will make a statement

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Businesses can have complex, multi-tiered global supply chains which create significant challenges in having visibility over working conditions throughout the supply chain. This means that companies need to be constantly vigilant in assessing and addressing their risk exposure.

In January, the Foreign Secretary announced a comprehensive package of measures to help ensure no UK organisations are complicit in the serious human rights violations being perpetrated against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

Revised, detailed Overseas Business Risk guidance was published on 12 January and, based on this new guidance, the Government has embarked on a comprehensive programme of engagement with businesses and UK trade bodies. Businesses should take heed of the updated guidance on Xinjiang to understand the human rights risks associated with sourcing from that region and take appropriate remedial action based on their circumstances.

### ■ **Foreign Investment in UK: China**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[4682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has (a) undertaken a recent review and (b) plans to review any national security implications arising from Chinese-based ownership of £143 billion of UK assets.

**Paul Scully:**

As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK will continue to pursue a positive trade and investment relationship with China, while ensuring our national security and values are protected.

The Government currently has powers under the Enterprise Act 2002 to intervene in certain mergers and takeovers on public interest grounds, including national security. The National Security and Investment Act 2021, due to come into force later this year, will modernise and strengthen our national security investment screening powers.

**■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus****Colleen Fletcher:****[3900]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support the recovery of the hospitality sector in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England from the impact of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has brought forward a substantial package of financial support for the hospitality sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Budget, my Rt hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £65 billion plan to provide support for jobs and businesses (including the hospitality sector), with extensions to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, self-employed support, business grants, loans and VAT cuts – bringing total fiscal support to over £352 billion.

**■ Insolvency: Companies****John Spellar:****[3793]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the fairness of the level of charges by insolvency firms on (a) business and (b) the public purse.

**Paul Scully:**

Insolvency legislation provides that the remuneration and expenses of insolvency officeholders are subject to the approval of creditors, and to the overall control of the court. Creditors have the power to challenge remuneration by application to court.

Statutory objectives introduced in 2015 require insolvency regulators to ensure that Insolvency Practitioners provide high quality services, at a cost to the recipient which is fair and reasonable. A response to the Government's call for evidence on insolvency regulation, which sought views on the impact and effectiveness of the objectives, will be published later in the year.

## ■ Postal Services

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[4084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure everyone has free access to a secure postal address.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government recognises the importance of a secure postal address in accessing a number of services and expects essential service providers to consider how best to meet the needs of vulnerable users without an appropriate postal address.

The universal postal service is intended to provide an accessible postal service for all. Ofcom is currently carrying out a review of the future regulatory framework for post and its call for stakeholders' views on the accessibility of USO postal services, particularly for vulnerable people and those who may be more reliant on postal services, closed on 20 May 2021. Ofcom intends to publish a full consultation on the future regulation of postal services later this year, before concluding its review in 2022.

Currently, Royal Mail operates two services to help vulnerable customers have access to their post. Its redirection service can be specially accessed by people with personal safety concerns and its PO Box service provides options for customers designed to meet specific circumstances and preferences.

## ■ Railways: Land

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[4605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to implement further measures to prevent the use of postcode location centroids that are determined on private property.

**Paul Scully:**

BEIS has responsibility for the Arms Length Bodies who collect, curate, and maintain the foundational data that underpins the use of post codes and addressing.

Ordnance Survey (working in a consortium of members including Royal Mail, Office for National Statistics, Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland, National Records of Scotland) publishes 1.7m centroids for postcodes across the UK.

The location of the postcode centroid is automatically generated by averaging more granular address data and 'snapping' to the nearest address – which includes residential properties – in order to ensure it sits on a building, rather than potentially in the middle of a road, a lake or a field. This was designed to support the primary use case for post code and address-based navigation (i.e. getting to the right approximate location). Ordnance Survey are currently exploring how they locate the centroid for postcodes in their Code Point products and would welcome engagement from any interested parties.



Ordnance Survey also publishes the location of every individual address in its AddressBase products, which is used by emergency services and delivery companies to navigate to the correct property more efficiently and effectively.

### ■ Remote Working: Environment Protection

**Esther McVey:** [\[3851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the environmental benefits of remote working.

**Paul Scully:**

Assessing the environmental benefits of remote working is complex. Account needs to be taken of issues beyond commuter transport – for instance, the energy efficiency of our housing compared with that of commercial buildings and the increase in local travel which home-working can bring. Overall, the evidence on the net environmental benefits is mixed.

The policy opportunities associated with homeworking from a climate perspective are more likely to concern how we promote low carbon actions and behaviours when people are working from home, rather than simply asking people to work remotely.

### ■ Renewable Energy: Seas and Oceans

**Alan Brown:** [\[3951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will use the COP26 climate change conference to promote Scotland's marine renewables sector.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

I am working with Ministers across the Cabinet, including the COP President Designate, to help promote the UK's story on energy transition. The COP President Designate has met with renewable energy industry bodies 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).

### ■ Restart Grant Scheme: Mental Health Services

**Justin Madders:** [\[3926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons mental health services were excluded from personal care businesses for the eligibility criteria of the Re-Start Grant.

**Paul Scully:**

The Restart Grant scheme aims to support businesses in their local economies to reopen as coronavirus restrictions are eased across the country. Mental health

services are out of scope for this scheme as they were not mandated to close during the January Lockdown due to the services they provide being essential to the public.

However, further funding has been made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant to support those businesses that have had their trade adversely affected by the local and national restrictions.

The Additional Restrictions Grant is a discretionary fund and is also administered by Local Authorities to support businesses in the way they see fit. Local Authorities in England have been allocated £2bn in additional funding to provide support that best suits their area.

Businesses should consult their Local Authority to determine whether they might be eligible for Additional Restrictions Grant support.

## ■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[3898]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support the recovery of the retail sector from the impact of the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

**Paul Scully:**

To support retailers and provide flexibility as they reopen, we have extended opening hours for retail, Monday through Saturday from 7am to 10pm until the 21<sup>st</sup> of June.

We are providing Restart Grants of up to £6,000 for non-essential retailers, and it is expected that over 450,000 non-essential retail businesses across the UK will benefit. Overall, Coventry has been awarded £13,572,540 in Restart Grants.

Government will continue to provide eligible retail properties in England with 100% business rates relief from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021. This will be followed by 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, capped at £2 million per business for properties that were required to be closed on 5 January 2021, or £105,000 per business for other eligible properties.

We have extended the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeiture for the non-payment of rent to the end of June 2021.

Local authorities have been allocated a further £425m in discretionary funding via the Additional Restrictions Grant to support businesses that are significantly impacted by the restrictions even though not required to close. For example, this could include businesses which supply the retail sector. This means more than £2bn has been made available to local authorities since November 2020.

We are also providing a £56m Welcome Back Fund to help councils prepare for the safe and successful reopening of our high streets and seaside resorts. Councils can use the fund to not only improve the look and feel of their high streets, but to run publicity campaigns and hold events that will boost footfall and encourage people back into high streets, thereby supporting local businesses. Coventry has been awarded £334,308 from the Fund.

## ■ Solar Power: Xinjiang

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[3836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support the UK solar industry's trade associations to verify the complex supply chains for solar panel to establish whether materials come via labour from people held in the camps in Xinjiang, China; what estimate he has made of the proportion of the solar panel market in the UK that sources basic materials from Xinjiang; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

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

We have provided detailed and specific guidance to UK businesses, and we will continue to engage businesses, including on these latest allegations.

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

## ■ Travel: Coronavirus

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[3845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to make an assessment of the value of business the travel sector has from 17 May 2021, when international travel resumes, compared to previous years based on the allocation of holiday destinations on the red, amber and green travel lists.

**Paul Scully:**

We are aware that the sector has been severely impacted by continued travel restrictions. The Government is continuing to engage with stakeholders - such as the Association of British Travel Agents, the Association of Independent Tour Operators and UKInbound - to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the sector.

We are working closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) to support the reopening of international travel, in line with the Government's reopening roadmap and the work of the Global Travel Taskforce.

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[3846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the value of business the travel sector has lost since the first lockdown compared to how much business support has been directed to the travel sector.

**Paul Scully:**

We are aware that the sector has been severely impacted by continued travel restrictions. The Government is continuing to engage with stakeholders - such as the Association of British Travel Agents, the Association of Independent Tour Operators and UKInbound - to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the sector.

The Government has continued to support travel businesses and individuals during this period of restrictions - including through the extension of various government-backed loans, grants and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes.

**Water Power: Exports**

**Alan Brown:** [\[3952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase export opportunities for the wave and tidal renewables sector while maintaining the existing high levels of UK supply chain content.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Government has a long history of supporting the development and deployment of wave and tidal stream technologies in the UK. To date, we have provided sustained and targeted support enabling the wave and tidal stream sectors to move from initial concept onto prototypes and now the first arrays. There are a number of UK companies pushing innovation in the blue energy sector domestically and internationally, including in partnership with UK low carbon development programmes in Indonesia, and with commercial opportunity support from DIT and SDI to export UK companies' tidal technology.

**Water Power: Finance**

**Alan Brown:** [\[3949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will allocate 100MW to wave and tidal projects within the Contracts For Difference Auction Round 4 to support project pipeline and expand the deployment of those technologies.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Government recently ran a Call for Evidence inviting views on the scope for marine technologies across the UK. This concluded on 30th September 2020 and we are currently reviewing the responses received. Wave and tidal stream projects remain eligible to compete in Pot 2 for CfD auctions. We will publish specific allocation round parameters in advance of the next auction, including consideration of technology-specific minima.

**Alan Brown:** [\[3950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will work with the Treasury to develop an Innovation in Power Purchase agreement as a complementary proposal for wave and tidal renewable technology developers that are not yet ready to participate in the Contracts for Difference process.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Government recently ran a Call for Evidence inviting views on the scope for marine technologies across the UK. This concluded on 30th September 2020 and we are currently reviewing the responses received. Government is interested, in principle, in determining whether there could be more effective funding models to support emerging technologies while they reduce their costs to a point where they can compete in the market with other forms of low-carbon generation. The IPPA is an interesting new funding model however, as it is a tax-based instrument, any decisions on its adoption would lie with Treasury. Officials continue to work with HM Treasury on developing policy for renewable energy.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Funerals: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[4553\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on determining the number of attendees allowed at a wedding ceremony by how many people the venue can safely accommodate and not a numerical limit in line with funeral restrictions during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Damian Hinds:**[\[4579\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the pilot of covid-19 testing at large-scale events, whether the Government plans to implement testing protocols for weddings to (a) enable the maximum number of guests to be increased from 30 May 2021 and (b) help that sector recover during its main summer season.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[5213\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons more than 30 people are allowed to attend a worship service while weddings are restricted to 30 people during stage three of the covid-19 roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of lifting that limit in line with worship service restrictions.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Events Research Programme aims to examine the risk of transmission of Covid-19 from attendance at events and explore ways to enable people to attend a range of events safely. To achieve this, the programme will explore how a combination of testing and non-pharmaceutical interventions (actions that people can take to mitigate the spread of coronavirus) can inform decisions on safely lifting restrictions at events from Step 4. The initial research pilots have already started and are taking place throughout May.

At Step 4, which will be no earlier than 21 June, the Government aims to remove all limits on weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and receptions, subject to the

outcome of the Events Research Programme and the Social Distancing Review. Further guidance will be issued ahead of Step 4.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Deployment

**John Spellar:** [\[7095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what Fleet Solid Support ship capacity is sailing with the HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group.

**James Heapey:**

RFA Fort Victoria has been allocated to the Carrier Strike Group as the Fleet Solid Support ship.

She will provide vital support to CSG21 by acting as a stores ship and a fleet tanker. RFA Fort Victoria is fitted with four central replenishment rigs, so she can replenish two warships simultaneously with fuel and stores and has another refuelling rig at her rear. She also has a large flight-deck, hangar and maintenance facilities for helicopters.

### ■ Space Technology: Private Sector

**John Healey:** [\[4522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department has provided to private space companies in each year since 2010; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the defence spending settlement on the funding available for that expenditure.

**James Heapey:**

Information on annual spend to private space companies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

We will invest an additional £1.4 billion over 10 years on space to support the Integrated Review commitment to make the UK a meaningful space actor. We will support the growth of the UK commercial space sector, and ensure the UK has the capabilities to protect and defend our interests in a more congested and contested space domain.

### ■ Spaceflight: Military Bases

**John Healey:** [\[4523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of seasonal conditions on the UK's (a) ability to launch space missions and (b) space capabilities.

**John Healey:** [\[4524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where the UK's military spaceports will be based.

**John Healey:** [\[4525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the UK's military spaceports will be used for; and how those spaceports will enhance the UK's military capabilities.

**James Heappey:**

Defence continues to work with partners across Government, including with the UK Space Agency, to fulfil the Government's ambition to become a meaningful space player. We are supporting the UK Space Agency's Spaceflight Programme which aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports from 2022. There is currently no plan for the Government to own any spaceports.

## EDUCATION

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Peter Dowd:** [\[3910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the National Plan for Music Education.

**Peter Dowd:** [\[3911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the Model Music Curriculum.

**Peter Dowd:** [\[3912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an estimate of the number of instrumental music teachers employed by Music Education Hubs that have lost their jobs as a result of (a) the covid-19 outbreak and (b) uncertainty about the future funding of those hubs.

**Peter Dowd:** [\[4622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to confirm the funding allocation for Music Education Hubs in 2022-23; how much funding will be allocated to those hubs; and for how many years that funding will be allocated.

**Nick Gibb:**

Work on the refresh of the National Plan for Music Education and Model Music Curriculum was paused due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Work has since resumed, and the Government announced the publication of the Model Music Curriculum on 26 March 2021. The Plan will be published in due course.

The Model Music Curriculum is designed to support schools to refresh music lessons with rich and diverse content for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. It will introduce pupils to



great composers and artists from across the world and develop their knowledge and skills in reading and writing music. This non-statutory guidance for schools will support the Government's ambitious plan for all children to have access to an excellent music education. The guidance is available to view here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974366/Model\\_Music\\_Curriculum\\_Full.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974366/Model_Music_Curriculum_Full.pdf).

The Government also announced it would provide the 119 music education hubs with £79 million for the financial year 2021-22. Working with 90% of state funded schools across England, the hubs are also expected to support schools that plan to implement the Model Music Curriculum, overseen by our national delivery partner Arts Council England. Decisions regarding funding for 2022-23 onwards are subject to the next Spending Review.

The Department does not hold information on instrumental music teachers employed or contracted by the music education hubs. We recognise the challenges hubs have faced during the COVID-19 outbreak due to a reduction of income from schools and parents following the first lockdown between March and July 2020. Hubs have been eligible to apply for the Government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, with a further £300 million announced in the 2021 Budget to support organisations across the cultural sector. This will help secure the viability of these hubs and allow them to continue the important role they play in sustaining music and music education in their local communities, as well as in schools.

## ■ Pupil Premium

**Janet Daby:**

**[5266]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made on reducing the attainment gap between children receiving pupil premium funding and those not receiving it.

**Nick Gibb:**

Enabling every child, irrespective of their background, to realise their potential at school has been the driving mission of the Department for Education since 2010. To this end, we have introduced a range of reforms to curriculum, teacher training, assessment and accountability, as well creating the pupil premium in 2011. The Department is spending more than £2.5 billion on the pupil premium in the 2021/22 financial year, meaning we will have invested more than £20 billion extra in our schools since its introduction so that they can provide additional support to disadvantaged pupils of all abilities. School leaders use this extra funding to tailor their support, based on the needs of their disadvantaged pupils, and focus on proven practice to improve outcomes, such as resources published by the Education Endowment Foundation.

A disadvantage gap index has been developed, that is unaffected by the Department's widespread educational reforms. Between 2011 and 2019, the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils narrowed by



13% at age 11 and 9% at age 16, according to the disadvantage gap index, and most disadvantaged pupils now attend good or outstanding schools. The Department's reforms, and the focus provided by the pupil premium, have supported this improvement.

In addition to protecting the pupil premium, the Department continues to support disadvantaged pupils and address the barriers to success that they face. In June 2020, as part of the £1 billion COVID-19 catch up package, we announced £350 million to fund the National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged students for the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22. There is extensive evidence that tutoring is one of the most effective ways to accelerate pupil progress, and the Department wants to extend this opportunity to disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. The programme provides additional, targeted support for those children and young people who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education because of school closures. Teachers and school leaders should exercise professional judgement when identifying which pupils would benefit most from this additional support.

On 24 February, the Department announced a £700 million education recovery package, building on the £1 billion from last year. As well as a range of measures to support all pupils to recover lost education, the package includes significant funding aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils. This includes a new one off £302 million Recovery Premium, which includes £22 million to scale up proven approaches, for state funded schools in the 2021/22 academic year. Building on the pupil premium, this grant will further support pupils who need it most. Allocations will reflect disadvantage funding eligibility and will have additional weighting applied to specialist schools, recognising the significantly higher per pupil costs they face.

The Government has also invested over £400 million to support vulnerable children in England to continue their education at home. To date, over 1.3 million laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools, academy trusts, local authorities and further education colleges.

## ■ Supplementary Schools

**Taiwo Owatemi:**

[\[4712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what level of funding is provided by his Department for Black supplementary schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department recognises that supplementary schools provide enriching activities and education for children in many subjects including arts, language, music, sport, and religion. We do not currently provide direct funding for any supplementary schools.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:****[4600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward new legislative proposals to tackle illegal puppy farms in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government takes the issue of low-welfare and illegal supply of puppies very seriously. Significant steps have already been taken to improve and update the laws on dog breeding in England to crack down on unscrupulous breeders who breed dogs purely for financial greed at the expense of animal welfare.

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 Regulations) anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs or who breeds three or more litters in a 12-month period needs to have a valid licence from their local authority. Licencees must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue, refuse or revoke licences. Commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens were banned in England from 6 April 2020. This prevents pet shops, pet dealers and other commercial outlets from selling these animals in England unless they themselves have bred them. It means anyone looking to get a puppy or kitten must buy direct from a breeder or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead.

On 12 May 2021 the Government published its Action Plan for Animal Welfare. This is a wide-reaching and ambitious plan to set out our current and future work on animal welfare. The Government has a manifesto commitment to crack down on puppy smuggling and one of our key reforms in the plan is to end the abhorrent, cruel practice of puppy smuggling and low-welfare pet imports. We are planning to bring in powers that will allow us to prohibit the importation and non-commercial movement of dogs into Great Britain that have been subject to low welfare practices.

■ **Bread and Flour: Regulation****Justin Madders:****[3937]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's written commitments to the Real Bread Campaign to review the Bread and Flour Regulations in November 2018, what progress the Government has made to ensure that there will be a public consultation on that matter; and if he will publish the timetable for the commencement of that consultation.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra committed to reviewing the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998, as they apply in England, following the end of the transition period. The planned review is being scoped now but it will focus on ensuring alignment with retained laws in other overlapping areas, as well as considering requests from industry for additional measures and exemptions. The review will also need to consider any DHSC

decisions around folic acid. As part of the review, we will hold a public consultation on policy options. We very much welcome views from key stakeholders such as the Real Bread Campaign to feed into this. Many of the issues raised by stakeholders to date are technically complex and we expect this review will need sufficient time to consider responses and agree the best way forward.

## ■ Dogs: Animal Welfare

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[4718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the steps the Government is taking to implement the ban on ear cropping dogs in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is currently an offence in England and Wales to carry out a non-exempted mutilation e.g. where it is not carried out for medical purposes, including the cropping of a dog's ears. The procedure is considered unnecessary and compromises the animal's welfare. Once the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021 comes into force on the 29 June 2021, anyone convicted of such an offence faces being sent to prison for up to five years, or receiving an unlimited fine, or both.

This strengthened penalty sends a clear message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated and will enable our courts to take a firmer approach to cases of illegally cropping a dog's ears and other forms of cruelty such as dog fighting, abuse of puppies and kittens, or gross neglect of farm animals.

On 12 May 2021 the Government published its Action Plan for Animal Welfare. This is a wide-reaching and ambitious plan to set out our current and future work on animal welfare. The Government has a manifesto commitment to crack down on puppy smuggling and one of our key reforms in the plan is to end the abhorrent, cruel practice of puppy smuggling and low-welfare pet imports. We are planning to bring in powers that will allow us to prohibit the importation and non-commercial movement of dogs into Great Britain that have been subject to low welfare practices, such as ear cropping, in line with our domestic legislation on these practices.

## ■ Pollinators: Conservation

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[4756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the number of bees and other pollinators in the UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

This is a devolved matter, and the information provided relates to England only.

Pollinators are a priority for this government and we are committed, with our many partners, to taking action to conserve bees and other pollinators, as set out in our National Pollinator Strategy. Our actions include: restoring and creating habitat for bees and other wild and managed pollinators to thrive; acting on the pressures that impact on pollinators, including by supporting Integrated Pest Management (IPM);

providing advice and raising awareness across society so that they can take action themselves; and supporting new monitoring and research.

We are introducing new schemes that reward farmers and land managers for producing public goods. These will encourage actions that support IPM and conserve and enhance habitats for bees and other pollinators. We have introduced a national pollinator monitoring scheme with trend estimates published annually, and we provide advice and guidance to landowners and the public through our Bees' Needs campaign.

Through the Healthy Bees Plan 2030, Defra works with beekeeping associations and other stakeholders to maintain a healthy honey bee population. We fund an extensive programme of apiary inspections, as well as education and training for beekeepers to maintain and improve husbandry standards. The number of honey bee colonies recorded on the National Bee Unit's BeeBase website has increased from around 108,000 in 2009 to 224,000 in 2020. This increase may be due in part to greater numbers of beekeepers choosing to register, rather than representing additional colonies or beekeepers.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Africa and Asia: Disability

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[4071]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure access to healthcare for people with disabilities in (a) Africa and (b) Asia.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is committed to ensuring people with disabilities globally are provided with the same access to health services as people without disabilities where possible. The pandemic has shown us that people with disabilities are disproportionately affected in crisis, so it is critical health systems are disability inclusive. The UK is supporting several countries in Asia and Africa, for example, to ensure COVID-19 public health messages are disability-responsive. In Nigeria alone this has reached at least 2.7 million people living with a disability. The UK is also helping people with disabilities access sexual health services. In 2019-2020 this resulted in a quadrupling of health visits by people with disabilities.

In January this government supported a new World Health Organisation resolution on the "the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities". If adopted, the resolution will help to ensure that global health responses, including in Africa and Asia, provide quality responses to people with disabilities. Later this year we will also launch the enhanced Disability Inclusion Strategy which will include a sharper focus on global health.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[4561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with AstraZeneca and Oxford University on their commitment to the WHO Covid-19 Technology Access Pool.

**Wendy Morton:**

Since the World Health Organisation (WHO) provided initial details on the COVID-19 technology access pool (C-TAP) in October 2020, the UK has led the way in bringing industry and the research community to the table. During our G7 presidency, we will continue this work with stakeholders, including the WHO as it establishes the governance structures, and refines the operating model for C-TAP. This includes pharmaceutical sector representatives, and research institutions such as Oxford University.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is working closely with key development partners in vaccines, such as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi the Vaccines Alliance, WHO, and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), along with development finance institutions, and the private sector to catalyse investments into vaccine manufacturing in Africa.

## ■ Egypt: Christianity

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[4070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Egyptian counterpart on ensuring the safety of Coptic Christians in Egypt from religious persecution

**James Cleverly:**

We have been encouraged by the positive steps the Government of Egypt has taken in recent years, including President Sisi's public commitments, to uphold the rights of minorities and freedom of worship. There has also been a number of protections for freedom of religion enshrined in Egypt's constitution and the Middle East's largest cathedral was opened in Egypt in 2019. Most recently, during their telephone call in March, the Prime Minister and President Sisi agreed on the importance of upholding freedom of religion and belief. Our strong relationship with Egypt also allows us to discuss sensitive issues, such as the ongoing detention of Coptic activist Ramy Kamel, which we raised with the Egyptian authorities in November 2020.

## ■ Internally Displaced People: Health Services

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[4072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure access to healthcare for internally displaced people abroad.

**James Cleverly:**

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are disproportionately affected by lack of access to healthcare and particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19. The UK COVID-19 response includes contributions of £137 million to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and £55 million to appeals from the Red Cross Movement in addition to support to NGOs, to reduce transmission and mitigate the primary and secondary impacts of the virus on vulnerable populations. The UK provided an early and substantial contribution of £548 million to the COVAX Facility, a mechanism to deliver rapid, global and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines to underserved populations including IDPs. The UK is also providing £340 million four-year core funding to the World Health Organisation including for its work in health emergencies, and helping to track the inclusion of IDPs, refugees and other persons of concern in national vaccination plans.

The UK is also advocating for longer term solutions for IDPs through the UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement so that IDPs are able to realise their fundamental rights, including access to health care. This is supported by UK-backed research into constraints to access to healthcare in conflict settings.

**Iran: Baha'i Faith**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[4068\]](#)

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

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[4069\]](#)

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

**James Cleverly:**

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

While Zoroastrians are formally protected in the Iranian constitution, the reality is that many non-Muslims face discrimination. Meanwhile, the Baha'i community in Iran continue to be systematically discriminated against, harassed, and targeted. We have repeatedly raised these persistent human rights violations with Iran. On 9 March, at the UN Human Rights Council, the UK called on Iran to end the discrimination and persecution of religious minorities, particularly towards the Baha'i and Christian converts.

We condemn the incarceration of all religious minorities for the act of practicing their faith in Iran. We regularly raise human rights with the Iranians at all levels and take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

## ■ Israel: Palestinians

**Martyn Day:**

[3972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 615 on Israel: Palestinians, what assessment his Department has made of the level of child casualties in the conflict in Gaza; and what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart to request the cessation of Israeli airstrikes in densely-populated civilian areas.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May, which is an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life. Every effort must be made to avoid loss of life, especially that of children.

The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 25 and 26 May for talks with senior leaders and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution as the best way to deliver Palestinian self-determination and ensure Israel's status as a Jewish, democratic state.

The UK has provided an initial \$4.5 million of UK aid to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, to help address immediate humanitarian needs.

## ■ Morocco: Western Sahara

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[4086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether Morocco claims sovereignty over all of Western Sahara.

**James Cleverly:**

That is a matter for the Government of Morocco. As the Foreign Secretary stated on 11 December 2020, the UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/israel-and-morocco-uk-responds-to-announcement-of-normalisation>.

The UK supports UN-led efforts to achieve a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. 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/nsgt/western-sahara>.

## ■ Somaliland: Coronavirus

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[5186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what practical assistance his Department is providing to the Government of Somaliland and in tackling the covid-19 pandemic.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK is one of the leading supporters of COVAX, designed to support equitable access to vaccines internationally. One million vaccines have been agreed for



Somalia, including Somaliland, of which a first tranche of 65,000 have arrived in Hargeisa and have been distributed across all regions of Somaliland. UK officials are monitoring the progress of this process and are working with the Somaliland government and international partners to support effective rollout, including via a weekly COVID coordination meeting. We have also provided £60,000 of PCR laboratory supplies to support COVID testing capacity.

## ■ Space: International Cooperation

**John Healey:**

[4521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what steps he has taken to further the development of international (a) norms, (b) rules and (c) principles on responsible behaviours in space in each of the last six months.

**James Cleverly:**

In December 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a UK-led resolution on "Reducing Space Threat through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour". The resolution called for States to study space threats and contribute their ideas to the United Nations Secretary-General by 3 May 2021. The United Kingdom submitted its views which can be found on the website of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/topics/outerspace-sg-report-outer-space-2021/>.

## ■ Western Sahara: Human Rights

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[4085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the joint communication issued by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention addressed to Morocco, expressing serious concerns about the human rights' violations committed against the Sahrawi people in the occupied territories of Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement.

**James Cleverly:**

Human rights is a UK priority around the world and we raise human rights issues with Morocco accordingly. The UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined. We have consistently supported language in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions which encourages the parties to continue their efforts to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara.



## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Care Homes and Health Services: Learning Disability

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[4563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the use of (a) restrictive interventions and (b) seclusion on people with learning disabilities in settings that provide (i) inpatient and (ii) residential care.

**Helen Whately:**

The Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018, will increase the oversight and management of the use of force or restraint in mental health units so that force is only ever used as a last resort. We are committed to publishing the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 draft statutory guidance for public consultation by late spring 2021 and we will set out a full timetable for commencing the Act at the earliest opportunity.

As part of our joint arm's length bodies' programme on Reducing Use of Restraint and Restrictive Practices, a set of standards and an accreditation scheme for training providers has been developed to provide assurances that staff in mental health services and social care services are adequately trained in safe and appropriate use of restraint. Since April 2021, all services across health and social care have been expected to use training in restrictive practices that is certified as complying with the Restraint Reduction Network Standards. These standards apply across child and adult services, including for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is also leading a new programme of work to transform the way they regulate services for people with a learning disability and autistic people. The CQC set out their expectations for providers in their policy Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture, as well as in their updated guidance, which gives inspectors further support to identify warning signs of a closed culture in services.

### ■ Care Homes: Quarantine

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[6264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the 14-day isolation period remains mandatory for people discharged to care homes from (a) hospital and (b) other care settings; when he plans to replace the isolation period with regular PCR testing; and whether in the event of a negative test result relatives are able to visit care settings during that period to assist with essential tasks, such as eating, dressing, washing or other actions that may be difficult for residents with dementia or other health conditions.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* Our guidance on admissions in to care homes states that those admitted to a care home should isolate for 14 days following admission. The 14-day isolation requirement was agreed by senior clinicians and reflects current understanding of clinical vulnerability and the potential for longer incubation periods

in care home residents. All residents should be tested before admission into a care home and within 72 hours of arrival, whether admitted from hospital, other care settings or the community. Regardless of the test results, the 14-day isolation period should still be observed.

Whilst visitors are not permitted during isolation periods, an 'essential care giver' can visit in order to provide essential care and support, provided they comply with the same testing and personal protective equipment arrangements as care home staff. We continue to keep our guidance to care homes under review and any changes will be based on the latest data and clinical advice.

### ■ Care Homes: Visits

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[4734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the proportion of care homes without covid-19 outbreaks that are adhering to the Government's guidance on care home visiting and out-of-home visits.

**Helen Whately:**

Departmental data show in the week ending 26 April 2021, 82.5% of care homes in England were able to accommodate residents receiving visitors within care homes, compared to 40.3% at the beginning of March 2021. The Care Quality Commission are investigating concerns about visiting where these are raised and offering support to assist care homes in opening up further to allow more visits in and out of care homes.

### ■ Children: Autism

**Carla Lockhart:** [\[4750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the prevalence rate of autism amongst the compulsory school age population in England in the latest period for which that data is available.

**Helen Whately:**

The Children and Young People Mental Health Survey dataset for 2017 reports an estimated autism prevalence rate of 1.5% amongst children aged five to 10 years old and 1.2% amongst children aged 11 to 16 years old.

### ■ Children: Disability

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[3060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether disabled children will be able to access additional speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, educational psychology and other therapeutic support over the summer 2021 school holidays.

**Helen Whately:**

As part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to look at how we can improve the provision of therapies to disabled children, within and outside of school settings.

NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance making clear that essential community services, including therapeutic support, must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or who are going through an assessment for one.

**■ Coronavirus****Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[6161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to release to the media, on a daily basis, the numbers of people hospitalised with covid-19 who are (a) vaccinated and (b) unvaccinated against the virus.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* The data requested is not currently held centrally in the format requested.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Damian Hinds:**[\[4577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of proposals to offer immunocompromised patients their second dose of the covid-19 vaccine sooner than 12 weeks.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government currently has no plans to reduce the length of time between the provision of first and second vaccine doses for people deemed to be clinically immunocompromised as a group.

However, there are a small number of patients who are about to receive planned immunosuppressive therapy and where clinically appropriate, should be considered for vaccination at least two weeks prior to commencing therapy, when their immune system is better able to respond. Where possible, it is also preferable for both first and second doses to be completed prior to commencing immunosuppression. Therefore, to provide maximum benefit, this may entail offering such patients the second dose at the recommended minimum for that vaccine.

On 14 May 2021, the Government accepted new advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and announced that appointments for a second dose of a vaccine would be brought forward from 12 to eight weeks for the remaining people in the top nine priority groups who have yet to receive their second dose. This is to ensure people across the United Kingdom have the strongest possible protection in response to the B.1.617.2 variant of concern. As a result, immunosuppressed

patients waiting for their second dose may be invited for to book an appointment within this revised timeframe.

## ■ Health Professions: Recruitment

**Anne Marie Morris:**

**[6303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the WHO guideline on health workforce development, attraction, recruitment and retention in rural and remote areas.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* The Government welcomes the World Health Organization's guideline on health workforce attraction, recruitment and retention in rural areas and is committed to ensuring there is a sufficient workforce supply across all geographies of England.

Five new medical schools have opened in hard-to-recruit areas, including rural and coastal locations in Sunderland, Lancashire, Chelmsford, Lincoln and Canterbury. To further attract trainees to remote geographies, foundation priority programmes were introduced in 2019 allowing applicants to rank their preference for selected priority programmes and be offered places prior to national allocation. The NHS People Plan has a key focus on retention. National Health Service organisations locally should shape their workforce plans to meet local workforce challenges focusing on both recruitment and retention to increase overall supply.

## ■ Health Services: Autism and Learning Disability

**Barbara Keeley:**

**[6245]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to remove financial incentives which can lead (a) to long lengths of stay and (b) delays to discharge for people with a learning disability and/or autism detained in inpatient units.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* In July 2020, we announced the three-year £62 million Community Discharge Grant in England to accelerate discharges into the community by addressing 'double-running' costs which can act as disincentive for discharge. We paid £20 million in total of the Community Discharge Grant to nominated lead local authorities during the summer of 2020. Allocations for 2021/2022 will be announced in due course.

The Building the Right Support Delivery Board has been established to drive further progress in reducing the number of people with a learning disability and autistic people in specialist inpatient settings through the development of community-based support. A priority for the Board is examining issues with funding flows, including assessing any financial disincentives preventing progress.

## ■ Health: Expenditure

**Philip Davies:**

[2247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the (a) revenue and (b) capital expenditure of the NHS was spent on (i) physical health and (ii) mental health in each of the last three years.

**Edward Argar:**

Information on the capital and revenue spend on both mental and physical health is not held in the format requested. There is no specific measure for spending on 'physical health' and some spending on physical health conditions will include treatment for mental health. While spend on specialist mental health services is available, it is not known how much non-specialist activity is devoted to mental health.

## ■ Joint Replacements

**Sarah Olney:**

[5227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that joint replacement surgeries are prioritised in the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2021]:* The Department is taking steps to ensure the National Health Service can treat patients safely as quickly as possible. Joint replacement is being prioritised through the High Volume, Low Complexity programme and the Getting It Right First Time programme. These programmes will provide best practice examples to help improve and joint replacement surgeries across the NHS.

## ■ Medicine: Education

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[R] [4587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Royal College of Physicians' position statement, NHS Workforce Planning: the case for transparency and accountability, what steps he is taking to increase the number of places to study medicine in universities over the next 10 years.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government recently increased the number of places to study medicine at English universities by 1,500 per year or 25%. As part of this expansion, which was completed in September 2020, we opened five new medical schools across the country.

The Government currently has no plans to increase the number of funded medical school places beyond this. We are committed to ensuring that the number of places reflect England's workforce requirements and continues to monitor current arrangements.

**■ NHS: Recruitment****Mr Steve Baker:****[R] [4588]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure NHS recruitment keeps pace with an increasingly elderly population; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is committed to ensuring there are sufficient staff numbers to meet England's workforce requirements, including taking account of demographic changes. At a national level, the Government is committed to expanding the supply of the National Health Service workforce and we are on track to deliver 50,000 more nurses by the end of this Parliament.

We have opened five new medical schools across England and are committed to funding an extra 1,500 undergraduate medical school places per year at English universities or a 25% increase, taking the total number of medical school training places in England to 7,500 each year. This expansion was completed in September 2020. Retention is also a key focus the NHS People Plan. There are almost 6,300 or 5.3% more doctors and over 11,200 or 3.8% more nurses in the NHS than last year.

**■ Prostate Cancer: Screening****Jim Shannon:****[4602]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make home testing kits that detect prostate cancer available through the NHS; and if he will publish his timetable for doing so.

**Jo Churchill:**

There are currently no plans to introduce a home testing programme for prostate cancer. The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC), which advises the Government and the National Health Service on screening, looked again at the evidence in November 2020 and maintained its recommendation against introducing a screening programme for prostate cancer. The UK NSC made its recommendation on the basis that the current prostate-specific antigen test used to detect prostate cancer was not accurate enough and would miss some cancers, meaning many men would receive unnecessary treatments causing more harm than it prevents.

The evidence for a prostate cancer screening programme, along with other potential programmes, is kept under review every three years. If new and significant evidence emerges, the review will be brought forward.

## ■ **Speech and Language Disorders: Disability Aids**

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[2485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who have lost their voice or have difficulty speaking have access to communication equipment.

**Helen Whately:**

In 2014 NHS England undertook a procurement exercise to establish a network of specialised augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) services. There are now 14 specialised AAC services in England which assess and provide specialised communication equipment to patients with complex communication needs. These services are now receiving approximately 2,000 new referrals and supplying 1,300 new communication systems a year to patients with a range of disabilities.

## ■ **Spina Bifida: Medical Treatments**

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve NHS treatment of spina bifida.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated to the treatment of spina bifida for 2021.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness of spina bifida and its warning signs among (a) healthcare professionals and (b) 999 operators.

**Helen Whately:**

Since 2019, NHS England has commissioned a highly specialised service undertaking open fetal surgery to treat babies with open spina bifida. Two provider units act as a single combined centre with a joint clinical fetal surgery co-ordinator and a joint surgery decision-making multi-disciplinary team. Pre-natal closure surgery has been shown to improve neurological and motor function for those babies that are in scope for pre-natal surgery. The Department does not hold specific details of funding for this surgery.

The Department is not currently carrying out work to raise awareness among healthcare professionals and 999 operators. However, warning signs of spina bifida are identified as part of a screening for spina bifida at the 20 week scan.



**■ Spina Bifida: South Yorkshire****Alexander Stafford:** [\[4081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated in 2021 for the treatment of spina bifida to the (a) Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust and (b) Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[4082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have spina bifida in (a) South Yorkshire, (b) the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust area and (c) the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust area.

**Helen Whately:**

Information on funding allocated to Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for the treatment of spina bifida is not held in the format requested.

The Department does not hold information on the number of individuals with spina bifida.

**■ Travel: Coronavirus****Navendu Mishra:** [\[4060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) investigate and (b) suspend the contracts of private companies that are failing to fulfil their obligations to provide PCR covid-19 tests and results on time to people returning to the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is working closely with private providers to ensure tests and results are delivered on time. Private providers performance is continually monitored including their ability to provide samples, analysis and report results on time. The Department takes rapid action when providers deliver inadequate services. This includes providers receiving a five-day warning to demonstrate they have rectified their service and if they do not, they are removed from the appropriate GOV.UK list.

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[4061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people who have paid for day two and day eight covid-19 tests upon returning to the UK but have not received them are not held up in quarantine; and whether those people will be compensated for unexplained delays in receiving (a) tests and (b) test results.

**Jo Churchill:**

Arrivals from amber list countries must take a test on or before day two for variant surveillance and unless they receive a positive result from their day two test, on or after day eight, to improve the efficacy of quarantine. Those travelling from a 'green list' country only need to take a test on or before day two. Arrivals should follow quarantine guidelines until they receive negative day two and day eight test results.



The Department is working closely with private providers to ensure tests and results are delivered on time to support individuals to meet legal requirements and end their quarantine period on time. Private providers performance for day two and day eight testing is continually monitored including their ability to provide samples, analysis and report results on time. We take rapid action when providers deliver inadequate services. This includes providers receiving a five-day warning to demonstrate they have rectified their service and if they are unable to do so, they are removed from the appropriate GOV.UK list.

As individuals are contracting a private service the Department does not offer compensation. However, we advise any customers who have had, or are having, a customer service issue with a private test provider, to first report this back to the provider. If the issue cannot be resolved, the consumer should to contact their local trading standards office.

Consumers are able to complain directly with the Department about private providers and we monitor these complaints and address these directly with private providers.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Drugs: Misuse

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[R] [\[4050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs plans to (a) conclude its inquiry and (b) produce its recommendations on Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs.

**Kit Malthouse:**

As the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) is independent from Government, the timings concerning its report on image and performance enhancing drugs is a matter for the ACMD.

The ACMD publishes its advice concurrent to its presentation to ministers.

I expect to receive an update from the ACMD on its priorities and ongoing commitments later this year.

### ■ Handguns: Sales

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[3873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with Scotland Yard on strengthening legislation on the sale of starter guns.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We are not currently looking to strengthen legislation in relation to the sale of starting guns.

A person must be registered with the police as a firearms dealer before they can sell firearms by way of trade or business, and a person requires a firearms certificate

issued by the police before they can purchase a small firearm for the purposes of starting races at athletic meetings. Such certificates will be conditioned accordingly and will only authorise the use of blank ammunition. Only those starters who are qualified up to a certain level under the UK Athletics grading structure should be granted such a certificate.

Starters of swimming, cycling and other races have no need of working firearms and may use starting pistols which can only fire blank ammunition. Such starting pistols do not have an open barrel, so they are not classed as firearms and are not subject to certification.

## ■ HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[4755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will undertake a review of investigatory practices by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services in response to criticism of their investigation of how the Police Service of Northern Ireland handled the funeral of Bobby Storey.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is independent of Government and the police. Their role is to assess and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and policing in the public interest using an evidence-based approach. In fulfilling this role, HMICFRS continuously review their approach to ensure their inspections are best placed to promote improvements.

As the Hon Lady will be aware, the inspection into the funeral of Mr Storey was commissioned by the Minister of Justice in Northern Ireland, who has expressed her gratitude for HMICFRS' swift and comprehensive report.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Mr John Baron:**

[\[6203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 1 February 2021, transferred to UKVI by the 23 March 2021, with further follow up letters of 1 April 2021 and 22 April 2021, on his constituent, reference JB30902.

**Chris Philp:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* I thank my Honourable Friend for his question, a response to his correspondence has been issued on the 26 May from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

## ■ Offences against Children: Ethnic Groups

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[4010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason her Department does not record the ethnicity of victims of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government recognises the importance of gathering crime data to inform policy and operational decisions. All police forces routinely collect and publish data on offences. However, published data relates to recorded offences rather than the characteristics of the victims who have experienced them. This is so that the published data reflects all recorded offences, including those where there is no specific, intended, or identifiable victim, or where there are multiple offences against one victim.

The Government remains determined to build on our understanding of the nature of child sexual abuse, including the ethnicity and background of victims. To inform our understanding of the number of victims and their ages, we use data gathered through the Crime Survey for England and Wales (ONS). We also draw on the research and insight produced by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, which we established in 2017, and why we draw on the insight of other experts including the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse, which has produced research on ethnic minority victims of CSEA.

We also work closely with local areas to improve their response to exploitation, enabling them to spot trends in abuse and protect local communities. In addition, we have increased investment in support services, including specific projects to support victims from BAME backgrounds.

## ■ Pets: Theft

**Siobhan Baillie:**

[\[4741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Pet Theft Taskforce is taking to tackle the challenges of gathering data on pet theft from police forces, including the (a) inconsistent data collection and recording methods and (b) lack of specific data collection on pet theft.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government recognises the distress pet theft causes will consider the evidence and what more could be done to prevent these cruel crimes. That is why we launched the Pet Theft Taskforce on 8 May. Among the activities that the Taskforce will be undertaking is work with police and other law enforcement partners is to understand the scale of pet theft.

**■ Police Scotland: UN Climate Conference 2021****John Lamont:**[\[3991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to offer support to Police Scotland during the COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office are supporting Police Scotland in the planning and delivery of the event whilst respecting operational independence and the devolved nature of policing in Scotland, noting that Counter Terrorism policing policy remains reserved.

The Home Office and the National Police Co-ordination Centre (NPoCC) are working closely with Police Scotland around the resourcing for the event, as well as sharing knowledge and experience in relation to policing operations from other high profile major events.

**■ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Travellers****Rachael Maskell:**[\[3963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with representatives of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on Part 5 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Following a public consultation in 2018, it was clear that more police powers were needed to tackle unauthorised encampments, which can cause distress and misery to many communities and businesses. In 2019, the Government conducted a public consultation, seeking views on how we should extend police powers. We sought views from a wide range of interested parties, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. In addition, the national charity - Friends, Family and Travellers - launched a campaign, through which they sought views and fed those in to the Home Office. All views expressed were considered by the Home Office when we took our decisions.

**■ Sexual Offences: Criminal Investigation****Navendu Mishra:**[\[4059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what measures are in place to prevent investigation bias in rape and serious sexual offence cases.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Decisions made during a rape and other serious sexual offence cases, including measures to ensure balance in an investigation are an operational matter for the forces involved.

The Government recognises that the declining numbers of rape and serious sexual offences reaching the courts and charges against offenders has, rightly, been the subject of public scrutiny and concern.

We are taking action to improve outcomes for rape cases through our end-to-end review of the criminal justice response to rape. The review covers from the point of a report to the police through to final outcome in court.

The end-to-end Rape Review will be published shortly.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Homes England: York

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[4640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether Sir Edward Lister, as Chair of Homes England, held any meetings or corresponded with property development companies or property investment companies in relation to the York Central development site.

**Christopher Pincher:**

York Central is one of the largest brownfield sites in England, which is being brought forward through a partnership of Homes England, Network Rail, the City of York Council and the National Railway Museum.

As Chair of Homes England, and a member of the York Central Strategic Board, Lord Lister had an important role in engaging local and delivery partners in the vision for York Central, which will transform underused land into vibrant and distinctive residential neighbourhoods, cultural spaces, and commercial space – boosting York's economy.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Department for International Trade: Correspondence

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[6456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of correspondence sent by hon. Members to her Department received a substantive response within the service standard in each month of (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government recognises the great importance of the effective and timely handling of correspondence.

The Cabinet Office is currently compiling data on the timeliness of responses to Hon. and Rt Hon. members from Government Departments and Agencies. This data will be released, and made available to Members, in due course.

**JUSTICE****■ Emergency Services: Crimes of Violence****Peter Kyle:**[\[3973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to amend the equality impact assessment for assaults on emergency workers in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to include information on the impact on disabled people.

**Chris Philp:**

The government has already published a full equalities assessment on its proposals to increase the maximum penalty of assaulting an emergency worker. I am aware of the ongoing nature of the Public Sector Equality Duty and our obligation to consider the equalities impacts of the proposals as they develop and are implemented in light of any new evidence. However there are no plans to update this assessment at this stage. As explained in the assessment, statistical data in relation to offenders who are disabled are not centrally recorded.

**■ Pets: Theft****Siobhan Baillie:**[\[4742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Pet Theft Taskforce plans to bring forward legislative proposals to tackle pet theft, such as (a) reforming the existing sentencing guidelines and (b) bringing forward bespoke proposals; and what non-legislative steps the taskforce will take to tackle pet theft.

**Chris Philp:**

The pet theft taskforce has been set up to gather evidence to understand the factors that may be contributing to any rise in pet thefts and to recommend any necessary measures – legislative and non-legislative - to tackle the problem. It will consider the issue from end to end, including causes, prevention, reporting, and enforcement, examining every option available to protect families from this hurtful crime and make sure perpetrators feel the full force of the law. The taskforce is due to report its recommendations in the summer.

The sentencing guidelines are produced by the Sentencing Council which is independent of Government and aims to promote greater transparency and consistency in sentencing.

**■ Prison Sentences****Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[4758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to reform the sentencing system.

**Chris Philp:**

This government is serious about fighting crime, protecting the public and creating a criminal justice system that people have confidence in. Delivering on our manifesto

promises, we are committed to introducing tougher sentencing for the worst offenders and to preventing automatic early release for serious crimes. But we must also give offenders a fair start on the road to rehabilitation, and we are introducing tougher, more effective community sentences which address the causes of offending.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> March the government introduced the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (PCSC Bill). This legislation will bring forward the new, smarter approach to sentencing set out in the Sentencing White Paper published in September 2020.

The PCSC Bill includes measures to ensure that serious sexual and violent offenders spend as much of their sentence behind bars as possible in order to reflect the severity of their crimes. It will end automatic halfway release from prison for an additional cohort of serious sexual and violent offenders, and make a Whole Life Order the starting point for the premeditated murder of a child. It will also double the maximum penalty for assaulting an emergency worker.

However, protecting the public is not just about better use of custody. The PCSC Bill will make community sentences more effective by extending the use of electronic monitoring, enabling the piloting of a problem-solving approach for certain community orders, and simplifying the Out of Court disposal framework.

Work is also underway on the non-legislative reforms set out in the Sentencing White Paper, which aim to tackle the underlying cause of criminal behaviour and improve the rehabilitation of offenders in the community.

## ■ **Prison Sentences: Erith and Thamesmead**

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[4065]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people are serving (a) prison sentences and (b) Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences in prisons in Erith and Thamesmead constituency; how many of those people serving IPP sentences are (i) post-tariff, (ii) have been recalled to custody and (iii) have been recalled to custody for non-compliance as opposed to further offending.

**Alex Chalk:**

For prisons in Erith and Thamesmead constituency (HM Prisons Isis, Belmarsh and Thameside), as at 31 March 2021:

(a) 1,347 people were serving prison sentences;

(b) 28 of these were serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences, of which:

(i) 28 were post-tariff;

(ii) 22 of which had been recalled; and

(iii) 8 of the recalled prisoners were recalled solely for reasons other than further offending.

There is often more than one reason for recalling an offender, specifically in relation to recalls taking place on the basis of non-compliance. For the purpose of this

answer, all reasons for recall other than further offending have been amalgamated to provide the answer for (b)(iii). The figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

The power to recall is a vital public protection measure. Offenders on licence in the community will be recalled to custody where they breach their licence conditions in such a way as to indicate that their risk has increased to the level where it may no longer be managed effectively in the community.

Our primary responsibility is to protect the public; however, HMPPS remains committed to safely reducing the number of prisoners serving IPP sentences in custody.

## ■ Prisoners' Release

**Anna McMorrin:**

**[6411]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders sentenced to custody served half or less than their full sentence term as a result of early release in each year from 2015 to date.

**Alex Chalk:**

Under section 244 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 most prisoners sentenced to a standard determinate sentence are required to be released at the half-way point, with the remainder served on licence.

Most prisoners serve standard determinate sentences (SDS). Until recently, this meant that they were released automatically at the half-way point of the sentence, regardless of the nature of the offence. We believe that serious violent and sexual offenders should serve sentences that truly reflect the severity of the crime, which will help to protect the public and give victims confidence that justice has been served. Since 1 April 2020, and the implementation of the Release of Prisoners (Alteration of Relevant Proportion of Sentence) Order 2020, anyone given an SDS of 7 years or more for serious sexual or violent offences where the maximum penalty is a life sentence is required to spend two-thirds – rather than half – of that sentence in prison before being released on licence. In the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, we are seeking to extend this to those sentenced to an SDS of between 4 – 7 years for certain serious sexual and violent offences.

Table 1 (attached) gives the relevant information.

### Attachments:

1. [Table for 6411 \[PQ 6411 final .xlsx\]](#)

## ■ Reoffenders: Children

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[4067]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department are taking to reduce reoffending rates among people convicted under the age of 16.



**Alex Chalk:**

The government is committed to preventing offending by children, in line with the principal aim of the youth justice system as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are a central part of the multi-agency work to realise this aim. YOTs support children on the cusp of offending and those who have already offended, addressing the causes of their behaviour and helping them to turn their lives around.

In recognition of the important role that YOTs play in preventing youth offending, we have secured an additional £7m funding for YOTs for 2021-2022 – an 8% increase on last year's funding. This will mean that the Youth Justice Board's anticipated funding for frontline services for 2021-2022 is £81.7m.

**TRANSPORT****■ Aviation: Coronavirus****Julian Sturdy:**[\[3843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of holidaymakers taking an initial covid-19 lateral flow test before flying and only requiring a PCR test in the event that the first test returns a positive or inconclusive result.

**Robert Courts:**

Holidaymakers are able to use a lateral flow test for pre-departure testing before travel to England as long as it meets the minimum performance standards. Testing post-arrival remains an important tool in our wider measures to manage the risk of imported cases of Covid-19, as well as allowing us to identify variants of concern. We are exploring options to reduce the cost of testing, including cheaper tests being used when holidaymakers return home and whether the Government would be able to provide pre-departure tests.

**■ Aviation: Licensing****Sam Tarry:**[\[5274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many UK commercial pilots have had to re-qualify for a CAA licence since the airline transport pilot licence ceased to be recognised.

**Robert Courts:**

No pilots have had to requalify. To secure privileges after the UK has left the EU, some UK commercial pilots transferred their licence to an EU Member State.

The EU Withdrawal Act ensures that transferred licences are recognised in the UK until the end of 2022. A new process now allows those who transferred the license to another Member State to obtain a UK license without having to requalify. Around 440 pilots have applied so far.

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[5275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the UK's departure from the EU on the (a) number and (b) turnover of Civil Aviation Authority qualified commercial pilots.

**Robert Courts:**

Between September 2018 and December 2020 some UK commercial pilots decided to transfer their licence to another EU Member State before the UK left the EU.

Now that the UK is able to issue commercial pilot licences independently of the EU, we expect that many of these commercial pilots will now apply to hold a UK licence in addition to their transferred EU licence.

### ■ **Electric Scooters: Licensing**

**Andrew Bridgen:**

[\[4606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the DVLA has plans to review the licence requirements for e-bikes and scooters.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In enabling e-scooter trials to begin, we were constrained by existing legislation, and could not quickly remove the driving licence requirement. We have allowed full and provisional licence holders to use e-scooters in the trials, opening trials up to the greatest number of people. It is important to note that the current regulations are designed to enable effective trials of e-scooters to be run, and therefore apply only to and for the duration of the trials. We have a national monitoring and evaluation programme in place to assess the safety and wider impacts of e-scooters. Any future decisions around licence requirements for e-scooters will be made using the evidence from this programme.

Section 32 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides that electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs) must not be driven on a road by anyone under 14 years of age. There is no requirement to have a licence to ride an EAPC provided that it complies with the requirements in the 2015 EAPC Regulations, and EAPCs complying with those same requirements do not need to be registered, taxed or insured. The Government has no plans to change any of the above.

### ■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[4669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of HS2 construction on other transport infrastructure projects.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 and its supply chain are working together to make sure that the company procures responsibly and minimises any potential impact on the wider availability of skills and materials across the UK. The availability of construction skills and materials

is regularly reviewed by High Speed Two (HS2) Limited, Network Rail, Highways England and the Department for Transport.

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

##### **Justin Madders:**

[3924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston of 8 March 2021 on pilotage legislation.

##### **Robert Courts:**

A response to your letter of 8 March was sent on 24 May.

#### ■ **Network Rail: Staff**

##### **Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[4012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many rail workers were killed on Network Rail's infrastructure between June 2019 and November 2020.

##### **Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Between June 2019 and November 2020, four Network Rail workers tragically lost their lives while working on rail infrastructure owned and managed by Network Rail. On 3rd July 2019, two Network Rail track workers were struck by a train at Margam, South Wales. On 8th April 2020, a Network Rail contractor was struck by a train at Roade, Northamptonshire. On 30th November 2020, a Network Rail employee was crushed by machinery at a depot in Eastleigh, Hampshire.

Ensuring the safety of the rail workforce and reducing the risk of fatalities is a priority for Government and the rail industry. The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) identified workforce safety as a key part of its 'Leading Health and Safety on Britain's Railways' strategy, which aims to ensure greater consistency in planning and implementing safe systems of work, more use of digital technology to reduce risk, and improved monitoring, supervision and assurance. In July 2019, Network Rail launched its track worker safety task force, aimed at reducing the risk of track worker fatalities. This task force is investing £70m to improve the planning and delivery of work at the trackside, through the development and design of new protection and warning systems, improved training for managers, and measures to reduce fatigue and improve the wellbeing of staff. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), trade unions and Network Rail's own contractors.

#### ■ **Passenger Ships: Coronavirus**

##### **Jackie Doyle-Price:**

[6271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending his Department's covid-19 advice on travel for cruising so that it aligns with advice for the aviation sector.

**Jackie Doyle-Price:** [\[6272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to remove his Department's advice against travelling on cruises for countries that are given green status under the covid-19 traffic light system.

**Jackie Doyle-Price:** [\[6274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether countries given green status under the covid-19 traffic light system will be open to cruise travel as well as aviation.

**Robert Courts:**

The Global Travel Taskforce (GTT) report confirms that international cruises will restart alongside the wider restart of international travel in line with the "traffic light" system. Operators will need to take account of the country traffic light system when planning itineraries. The restart of international cruises will be subject to continued satisfactory evidence from domestic restart and cruising in other countries. This will be considered at each of the GTT checkpoint reviews, with the next taking place on 28 June. International restart is also subject to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the UK government and industry covering the cost and liabilities of repatriation.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice is a separate matter for the Foreign Secretary. My officials and I continue to work closely with the cruise industry, the FCDO, UK Health Security Agency and across Government to ensure a safe restart of international cruises from the UK.

## ■ Railways

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[4675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure the (a) safety and (b) confidence of staff and passengers in train travel and encourage that travel in the context of (a) faults discovered in Hitachi trains and (b) the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The safety of rail workers and passengers is our highest priority. Following maintenance checks where engineers discovered cracks in some Hitachi trains, Hitachi has implemented a detailed inspection regime that trains have to pass before entering passenger service. This regime was developed in conjunction with, and approved by, the relevant train operators working with the independent safety regulator, the Office for Rail and Road.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have issued comprehensive guidance to train operators on the steps they need to take to protect staff, in line with Public Health England advice, as well as safer travel guidance for passengers, both of which are regularly reviewed and updated. This includes a range of measures to protect and reassure passengers including enhanced cleaning regimes on high touch points,

and highlighting quieter services to travel when booking tickets on its websites and apps.

Passengers are urged to check before they travel and to plan ahead, as transport services and roads are likely to be busier as restrictions ease. They are reminded to follow safer travel guidance when they travel, including wearing a face covering unless exempt, sanitising their hands regularly and keeping their distance where possible.

## ■ Railways: Parking

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[4634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Network Rail is planning to spend on new car parking facilities in the next five years; and how many new car parking spaces will be created.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The table below sets out the number of car parking spaces that are planned to be created in the next five years.

Car Park Investment Schemes

LOCATION	SPACES
Cardiff	63
Northampton	400
Peterborough	90
Pulborough	60
Wellingborough	1,000
Total	1,613

All of the above are of no cost to Network Rail. They are delivered by development schemes which also release land for housing. Network Rail are not currently progressing any self-funded schemes and they keep schemes delivered by developments under review.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[4636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much is LNER is planning to spend on the construction of new car parking facilities in the next five years; and how many new car parking spaces will be created.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Over the next five-years London North Eastern Rail (LNER) plan to construct a new car park at Berwick-Upon-Tweed station at a cost of approximately £2,100,000. This will create an additional 105 car parking spaces at the station. In addition, LNER will

continue the rollout of Auto Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at all 11 stations managed by LNER at approximately £1,200,000 and install a power supply at both Grantham and Peterborough stations, in advance of a third party supplying the electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, to enable the trailing of EV charging points at approximately £850,000.

## ■ Railways: Tickets

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[4576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the prices of the new flexible carnet tickets announced on 20 May have not been announced; on what date those prices will be published; for what reasons the tickets can be bought on 21 June 2021 but cannot be used for travel until seven days later; and what assessment he has made of the ability of (a) commuters (b) employers to plan for a safe return to work for people who have been working from home during the covid-19 outbreak without full information on flexible commuting costs.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As announced on 20 May, alongside the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the Government is introducing new flexible season tickets across England this year, with the new tickets going on sale on 21 June, and becoming available for use on 28 June.

Tickets will go on sale a week in advance to provide passengers enough time to consider the best option for them before planning travel. A new season ticket calculator will be available for passengers to check the best value option for their travel plan.

Illustrative savings for routes across the country are available now in the press notice announcing the launch of flexible season tickets on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), but final prices will be published on 21 June.

We continue to work closely with operators and other stakeholders to ensure we can support people to return to the network safely and with confidence, including people travelling to work, in line with the milestones set out in the Government's roadmap for exiting national measures. In line with the easing of restrictions on 17 May, operators increased service levels to around 85 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

## ■ Schools: Transport

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[3823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will issue guidance to (a) parents and (b) children on the use of safe transport to school including the safe use of (i) electric bikes, (ii) e-scooters and (iii) electric skateboards.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

E-scooters and electric skateboards cannot be used legally on the road or pavement, and the Government would not therefore support their use as a safe way of getting to

school. The Department is supporting carefully controlled trials of e-scooters in 32 trial areas which will inform future policy decisions on this matter.

The travel guidance on gov.uk, updated on 17 May, continues to recommend that people should walk or cycle where possible. The Department has no plans to issue further guidance on this matter but will continue to emphasise the importance of walking and cycling to school, and has increased to £18 million its funding of Bikeability training for schoolchildren in the current financial year. Only those over 14 are legally allowed to ride an e-bike, and, like all cyclists, they should follow the advice in The Highway Code. The Bikeability Trust will be reviewing its resources to help more schools prepare for Bikeability training, and will look to include information about e-devices in future.

### ■ **Trains: Hitachi**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[4003]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the cracking of Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series affects the Government's guarantee for usage of those trains for 27.5 years.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

We have a contract with Agility Trains to provide trains for passenger services for another 24.5 years. We expect them to meet that contracted obligation.

### ■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

**Julian Sturdy:**

**[3844]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of updating the watch lists between official reviews of the red, amber and green travel lists to offer an indication of which countries are most likely to change lists.

**Robert Courts:**

We have always been guided by the science and that remains the case. The allocation of countries is regularly reviewed, and we will respond to emerging evidence. The Joint Biosecurity Centre will publish data and analysis to support the process of allocating countries.

To give passengers more certainty when travelling, a 'green watchlist' will be introduced to help identify countries most at risk of moving from 'green' to 'amber'. The watchlists will provide greater assurance for those who wish to travel abroad to countries on the 'green' list.

**Jackie Doyle-Price:**

**[6273]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what evidential threshold will be used when reviewing the travel status of foreign countries under the covid-19 traffic light system.



**Robert Courts:**

Decisions on red, amber and green list countries are taken by Ministers, who take into account risk assessments produced by the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), alongside wider public health factors.

Key factors in the JBC risk assessment of each country include:

- genomic surveillance capability
- COVID-19 transmission risk
- Variant of Concern transmission risk

A summary of the JBC methodology used to produce risk assessments is published on gov.uk.

**Travel: Quarantine****Stephen Morgan:**[\[4691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of people returning to the UK from red list countries via Turkey to avoid covid-19 hotel quarantine; and what steps his Department is taking in response to that activity.

**Robert Courts:**

Turkey was added to the UK's red list from 4am on Wednesday 12 May.

Passengers who have been in a country or territory on the red list in the 10 days prior to their arrival will only be allowed to enter the UK if they are a British or Irish National, or have residence rights in the UK. Alongside the requirements to take a pre-departure test and complete the Passenger Locator Form, most people who are allowed to enter the England from a country on the red list will be required to quarantine for 10 days in a government-approved managed quarantine hotel with Covid-19 tests on days 2 and 8.

Given the spread of the virus globally, the public should not travel to red list countries or territories.

**TREASURY****Buildings: VAT****Stephen Farry:**[\[7323\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reducing VAT on hospitality and housing renovation in Northern Ireland to increase the uptake of retrofitting measures in existing buildings.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government maintains a number of VAT reliefs on construction and renovation, including a zero rate of VAT on new-build residential or qualifying buildings, a reduced rate of VAT on residential renovations which includes conversions of buildings from one residential use to another, converted from commercial to

residential use, and the renovation of properties that have been empty for two years or more prior to the renovation work. Renovation of commercial buildings attracts the standard rate of VAT and is recoverable in the usual way.

Expanding these reliefs to include all renovations would cost approximately £3.75bn per year and would require reductions in spending or increasing taxes elsewhere. The Government has no plans to conduct a review of the VAT treatment of construction.

## ■ Central Bank Digital Currencies

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7115\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has taken steps toward introducing a central bank digital currency.

**John Glen:**

The UK, like many countries globally, is actively exploring the potential role of central bank digital currencies. The Bank of England published a discussion paper in March 2020, which considered the possibility of a retail central bank digital currency that could be used by households and businesses to make payments.

At Fintech Week 2021, the Chancellor announced a new Taskforce led by HM Treasury and the Bank of England to lead the UK's exploration of a central bank digital currency, with separate forums to engage civil society and technology experts throughout. The Taskforce aims to ensure a strategic approach is adopted between the UK authorities as they explore a central bank digital currency, in line with their statutory objectives, and to promote close coordination between them. The Government and the Bank of England have not yet made a decision on whether to introduce a central bank digital currency in the UK, and will engage widely with stakeholders on the benefits, risks and practicalities of doing so.

## ■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation

**Philip Davies:**

[\[6222\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime is for crypto asset businesses; and if he will make a statement.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[6223\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the backlog of applications for crypto asset anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration; and if he will make a statement.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[6224\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many crypto asset businesses have outstanding applications for anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration with the Financial Conduct Authority.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6225\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many crypto asset businesses have received anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration from the Financial Conduct Authority since that regime was introduced in 2020.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many crypto asset businesses that did not have temporary registration have received anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration from the Financial Conduct Authority since that regime was introduced in 2020.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications from crypto asset businesses for anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration have been rejected by the Financial Conduct Authority.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6228\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Financial Conduct Authority on the anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime for crypto asset businesses.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6229\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the crypto asset industry on the anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime for crypto asset businesses.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6230\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with consumer groups on the anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime for crypto asset businesses.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6231\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority's anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime for crypto asset businesses.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6232\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the timeliness of the Financial Conduct Authority's anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime for crypto asset businesses.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6233\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the average length of time taken for the Financial Conduct Authority to process applications for anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing crypto asset registration.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6234\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the UK's status as a FinTech hub of the delays to the crypto asset anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime by the Financial Conduct Authority.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6235\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the UK's attractiveness to new crypto asset businesses of the delays to the crypto asset anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime by the Financial Conduct Authority.

**Philip Davies:** [\[6236\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the UK's international competitiveness of the delays to the Financial Conduct Authority's crypto asset anti-money laundering / counter-terrorist financing registration regime.

**John Glen:**

The UK is committed to having a robust AML regime for cryptoassets which will help to bolster confidence in the UK as a safe and reputable place to start and grow a cryptoasset business.

On 10 January 2020, the FCA became the anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing (AML/CTF) supervisor for cryptoassets firms. Due to the complexity and standard of applications received, the FCA was not able to process and register all applications by the 10 January 2021 deadline. A significant number of firms have failed to implement appropriately robust AML control frameworks, and to employ fit and proper personnel.

On 16 December 2020 the FCA announced that it was establishing a 'Temporary Registration Regime', under which relevant firms are eligible to continue trading pending a decision. This is due to expire on 9 July 2021.

As of 24 May 2021, 5 cryptoasset businesses have received registration from the FCA since 10 January 2020. Of the firms assessed to date over 90% have withdrawn their application following FCA intervention. There are 167 cryptoasset businesses with outstanding applications for AML/CTF registration with the FCA. 77 new cryptoasset businesses have applications pending full assessment.

On 7 January HM Treasury published a consultation on the broader regulatory treatment of cryptoassets, with a focus on cryptoassets known as stablecoins. It also included a call for evidence on the use of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) in financial markets. This consultation has now closed. The government is processing responses and will outline next steps in due course. Any future regulatory regime for cryptoassets set out by the Government in light of this consultation will aim to balance the potential risk to consumers with the ambition to stimulate competition and innovation in the industry.

HM Treasury officials are in regular contact with the FCA, as well as individual firms, industry groups and associations and consumer facing organisations to listen to their concerns on the full range of financial services related issues including cryptoassets.

## ■ Employees' Contributions: Older Workers

**Paul Bristow:** [\[7294\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) implications for revenue and (b) potential merits of extending employee national insurance contributions to people over the age of 65.

**Jesse Norman:**

The “Estimated costs of principal tax reliefs” publication sets out that the estimated cost of the exemption of those over State Pension age (SPa) from paying National Insurance contributions (NICs) was about £1.1bn in 2019-20. However, this does not take account of any behavioural changes as a result of the relief and, in practice, if it were withdrawn, taxpayers’ behaviour could alter so that the actual yield would be very different from, and often smaller than, that shown in the tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>.

As with all taxes, the Treasury keeps National Insurance Contributions under review.

## ■ Financial Services: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[7234\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the global emissions footprint of the UK financial sector.

**John Glen:**

The UK follows the agreed international approach for estimating and reporting greenhouse gas emissions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is for countries to report emissions produced within their territories. All UK domestic and international GHG emissions reductions targets, including our Net Zero commitment, are based on these territorial emissions.

The UK was the first major economy to commit to Net Zero by 2050, and to achieve that ambition, we want to ensure that every financial decision takes climate change into account. This will require a drastic increase in the quantity, quality and comparability of climate-related disclosures.

That is why, in November 2020, the Chancellor announced the UK’s intention to make disclosures in line with the recommendations of the Task Force for Climate-related Financial Disclosures mandatory in the UK across the economy, including the financial services sector, by 2025. This commitment is world-leading and significant progress towards achieving our ambition, including new requirements for premium-listed firms to disclose their Greenhouse Gas emissions, has already been made.

We have also committed to implementing a green taxonomy that will establish a common definition for 'sustainable economic activities' and improve understanding around the impact of firms' activities and investments on the environment.

Together, these measures will ensure that firms across the whole economy are disclosing robust and comparable climate and sustainability-related information that is decision-useful for investors. This will help close the sustainability data gap, as well as preventing greenwashing and supporting the greening of the UK economy.

## ■ Taxpayer Protection Taskforce

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[7310\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what powers the Taxpayer Protection Task Force will have.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Taxpayer Protection Taskforce is made up of 1,265 FTE officers of HMRC, will be in place for 2021/22 through to 2022/23, and will extend and expand the number of people HMRC have deployed on compliance activity since HMRC had powers to investigate claims.

Officers will have access to, and apply where appropriate, the normal enquiry, penalty and information powers of HMRC. These include legal powers to carry out civil investigations into suspected CJRS fraud, which were granted when the Finance Act received Royal Assent on 22 July 2020.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Domestic Abuse: Discretionary Housing Payments

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[4001\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on collecting data on domestic abuse survivors' access to Discretionary Housing Payments.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Equalities Ministers meet frequently with Ministerial colleagues across government to discuss a range of issues.

Since 2011, the Department for Work and Pensions has provided local authorities (LAs) with Discretionary Housing Payments funding of over £1 billion, to support vulnerable groups. The allocation of these payments is for LAs to decide, in line with their own priorities and reflecting government guidance aimed at targeting funds to those most in need, including domestic abuse survivors.

**Public Sector: Equality****Ruth Jones:** [\[4027\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Public Sector Equality Duty in ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments are (a) undertaken and (b) published on Government policies.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty all public authorities are required by law to ensure that they have due regard to equality considerations when carrying out their functions. My officials in the Equality Hub provide advice to Government Departments and other public bodies where appropriate to assist with this.

Due regard can be had through documentation often referred to as an 'equality impact assessment' but production of an equality impact assessment, as such, is not a legal requirement, and different approaches to compliance with the duty may be appropriate depending on the circumstances.

There is no statutory requirement to publish assessments and practice varies. Decisions on publication are a matter for the public body concerned, given the particular circumstances.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****Children: Poverty****Stephen Morgan:** [\[6440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the recently published End Child Poverty data (a) nationally and (b) for Portsmouth South constituency; and if she will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

No assessment has been made.

In 2019/20, 17% of children were in absolute poverty, before housing costs, a 1 percentage point reduction since 2010. There were also 700,000 fewer people in absolute poverty before housing costs than in 2010, including 100,000 fewer children.

The Department now publishes supplementary official statistics on the number of children in low income families at constituency level. Children in Low Income Families data is published annually. The latest figures on the number of children who are in low income in Portsmouth South, covering 2019/20, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-fye-2015-to-fye-2020>.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £111 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, now the 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 Portsmouth City Council this means funding of £1,211,956.46.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help parents move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty. We are investing over £30 billion in our ambitious Plan for Jobs which is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country.

**Afzal Khan:**

**[6446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the level of child poverty in (a) England and (b) Manchester Gorton constituency.

**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 £7.4 billion 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. Additionally, 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.

National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication. Data for Manchester Gorton is unavailable due to insufficient sample size.

Latest statistics for the levels of children who are in low income in England, covering 2019/20, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-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).

In the three years to 2019/20, the absolute child poverty rate, before housing costs, in England was 18%, down 3 percentage points since the three years to 2009/10

The Department now publishes supplementary official statistics on the number of children in low income families at constituency level. Children in Low Income Families data is published annually.

The latest figures on the number of children who are in low income in Manchester Gorton and in England, covering 2019/20, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-fye-2015-to-fye-2020>.

Due to methodological differences, the figures in these two publications are not comparable

## ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Alison McGovern:**

[2272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the average number of kickstart places made available by each employer participating in the scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 20 May 2021]:* Employers wishing to participate in the Kickstart scheme can apply direct or with the support of a Gateway organisation – a Gateway application will usually include jobs from a number of employers. As of 6 th May (since the beginning of the Scheme) the average number of vacancies per approved Kickstart application is 15 for Employers, 41 for Gateways, and an average of 28 for both Employers and Gateways combined.

\*the above figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system, which has been developed quickly.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[6283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason data about disability is not collected by applications to the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* The Universal Credit system collects data on claimant's disabilities but as this is voluntary we do not currently record specific types of disability or health condition of Kickstart participants. While we do plan to evaluate the experiences of disabled people participating in Kickstart, it will not be possible to quantify specific types of disability owing to the small sample sizes involved.

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[6284]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how her Department will collect data on disability as part of its evaluation of the effectiveness of the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2021]:* The Department of Work and Pensions will track the success of Kickstart amongst young people on the scheme who have a disability or health condition and will aim to do this as part of the evaluation. We plan to do this using a combination of evidence sources including management information (Universal Credit claimants are asked if they have an illness, disability or health condition and we can link to other datasets to see if they are on any kind of disability benefits) and survey data

**Local Housing Allowance: Rents****Justin Madders:**[\[3931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of Local Housing Allowance relative to rental costs.

**Will Quince:**

An assessment has been made in respect of Local Housing Allowance rates against rental costs for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claimants in the private rented sector. See the attached table in the PQ [183052](#).

We increased LHA rates to the 30th percentile of local rents in April 2020. This significant investment of nearly £1billion has provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support last year than they would otherwise have received.

In 2021/22 claimants will continue to benefit from the increase. We are maintaining this investment by keeping LHA rates at the same levels from April 2021.

**Social Security Benefits****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[6383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1170 on Social Security Benefits, what her Department's rationale is for not undertaking an assessment of the adequacy of financial support provided to people who have moved from (a) severe disability premium and (b) other legacy benefits to universal credit; and if her Department will undertake such an assessment in order to better understand whether that financial support is adequate.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

There is no objective way of deciding what an adequate level of benefit should be as everyone has different requirements. Income related benefit rates are not made up of separate amounts for specific items of expenditure such as food or fuel charges. There are no plans to undertake such an assessment.

The Government has given a commitment that no eligible claimant who has had no change of circumstances and who claims Universal Credit as part of the move to Universal Credit process will have a lower entitlement to Universal Credit than they had to their total legacy benefits at the point they claim. To ensure this commitment is met, Transitional Protection will be awarded where necessary.

Payments will continue to be available to those entitled to a relevant legacy benefit that includes a severe disability premium (SDP) and who move to Universal Credit following a change of circumstances on or after the removal of the SDP Gateway on 27 January 2021. These payments are subject to claimants continuing to meet the SDP qualifying criteria at the time they make their new Universal Credit claim. The transitional SDP element will be set at the same levels as now.

## ■ Universal Credit: Housing

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[\[6183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information her Department holds on the the median (a) gap between rent and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and (b) deduction for universal credit claims in the private rented sector where LHA does not cover the rent and which are subject to deductions for (i) universal credit advances, (ii) universal credit overpayments and (iii) tax credit overpayments in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Will Quince:**

In 2020/21 a boost of almost £1 billion to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in response to Covid-19, provided 1.5 million households in the private rented sector with around £600 more in housing support over the year. For those who require additional support with housing costs Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available.

We carefully balance our duty to the taxpayer to recover overpayments with our support for claimants. Steps are in place to ensure deductions are manageable; we lengthened the payback period from 12 months to 24 meaning in effect someone can receive 25 payments over 24 months and also reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 30% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance enabling claimants to take home more of the award.

a) In February 2021, where there was a gap between rent and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) the median was £100 per month.

b) In February 2021, the median deduction for Universal Credit claims in the private rented sector where LHA does not cover the rent and which are subject to deductions were:

- i. £61 for Universal Credit Advance deductions
- ii. £52 for Universal Credit Overpayment deductions
- iii. £53 for Tax Credit Overpayment Deductions

Notes:

- 1) Figures are rounded to the nearest £1.
- 2) The Universal Credit Overpayments and Tax Credit Overpayments figures do not include deductions due to fraud.

3) Figures are only available up to February 2021 to correspond with the latest UC Official Statistics.