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CONTENTS

ANSWERS	8	■ Natural Gas: Carbon Emissions	15
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	8	■ Research Bureaucracy Review	15
■ Belt and Road Initiative: China	8	■ Research Bureaucracy Review: Animal Experiments	16
■ Business: Government Assistance	8	■ Research: Finance	16
■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Re-employment	9	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Urban Areas	17
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	9	■ Unfair Dismissal: Temporary Employment	17
■ Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges	10	■ Water Power: Finance	18
■ Employment: Scotland	10	■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans	18
■ Energy: Meters	10	CABINET OFFICE	19
■ Help to Grow Scheme	11	■ 11 Downing Street: Repairs and Maintenance	19
■ Innovation	11	■ Africa and African Union: G7	20
■ Iron and Steel: Safeguard Measures	12	■ Blood: Contamination	20
■ Life Sciences	13	■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries	20
■ Liquefied Petroleum Gas: Bottles	13	■ Crown Commercial Service: Contracts	21
■ Local Government: Greenhouse Gas Emissions	14	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Correspondence	22
■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme: Wales	14	■ Emergencies: Mobile Phones	22
■ National Digital Twin Programme: Finance	14	■ Government Property Agency: Contracts	23

■ Press Conferences: Sign Language	24	■ Richard Paniguian	37
COP26	24	■ Submarines: Iron and Steel	37
■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Local Government	24	■ Type 45 Destroyers: Operating Costs	37
DEFENCE	25	■ Warships: Shipbuilding	37
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	25	DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	38
■ Apache AH-64 Helicopters: Guided Weapons	25	■ Advertising: Internet	38
■ Armed Forces: Foreign Nationals	25	■ BBC: Royal Charters	39
■ Armed Forces: Immigration	29	■ Choirs: Coronavirus	39
■ Army: Employment	30	■ Commonwealth Games: Wales	43
■ Chinook Helicopters: Procurement	30	■ Company Liquidations: Wakefield	44
■ Clyde Naval Base: Fire and Rescue Services	31	■ Company Liquidations: West Yorkshire	45
■ Defence Equipment: Sales	31	■ Cycling	46
■ Defence: Technology	32	■ Events Industry: Coronavirus	46
■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel	33	■ Football Governance Fan-led Review	47
■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement	33	■ Football: Asia	48
■ Hercules Aircraft: Special Forces	34	■ Gambling: Advertising	48
■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Weapons	34	■ Listed Events: Gender	49
■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Antisubmarine Warfare	34	■ Loneliness: Coronavirus	50
■ Military Aircraft: Procurement	35	■ Music: Coronavirus	51
■ Oman: Armed Forces	35	■ National Leisure Recovery Fund	52
■ Oman: Demonstrations	36	■ National Lottery: Scratch Cards	52
■ Oman: Military Aid	36	■ National Lottery: Standards	53
■ RAF Lossiemouth: Maritime Patrol Aircraft	36	■ Ofcom: Public Appointments	53
■ RAF Valley: Red Arrows	36	■ Social Media: Females	54
		■ Sports: Coronavirus	54
		■ Television Licences: Autism and Dementia	55

EDUCATION	55	■ Guatemala: Non-governmental Organisations	71
■ Arts: Higher Education	55	■ Haiti: Coronavirus	71
■ Assessments	56	■ Haiti: Politics and Government	71
■ Children: Poverty	56	■ Mali: Politics and Government	72
■ Department of Education: Correspondence	57	■ Nepal: Humanitarian Aid	72
■ Outdoor Education: Closures	58	■ Overseas Aid: Health Services	73
■ Primary Education: Sports	58	■ Religious Freedom	73
■ Schools: Protective Clothing	59	■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights	74
■ Schools: Religion	60	■ Tigray: Human Rights	74
■ Schools: Sexual Offences	60	■ Tigray: White Phosphorus	74
■ Schools: York	61	■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus	75
■ Students: Loans	62	■ Xinjiang: Uyghurs	75
■ Universities: Coronavirus	62	■ Zimbabwe: Political Prisoners	76
■ Universities: Foundation Courses	63	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	77
■ Universities: Racial Discrimination	63	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	77
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	64	■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Admissions	77
■ Animals: Antibiotics	64	■ Baby Care Units	78
■ Environment Agency: Finance	64	■ Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus	78
■ Flood Control	65	■ Blood: Contamination	79
■ Plastics: Pollution	65	■ Cancer: Waiting Lists	79
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	66	■ Cereals	79
■ British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus	66	■ Children	80
■ Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting	67	■ Coronavirus: Screening	81
■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Overseas Aid	68	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	81
■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Volcanoes	69	■ Eating Disorders: Health Services	84
■ Eritrea: Ethiopia	70	■ Food: Labelling	85
■ Ethiopia: Overseas Aid	70	■ Health Services: Females	87
		■ HIV Infection: Drugs	88
		■ Integrated Care Systems	88

■ Integrated Care Systems and NHS Trusts: Debts	89	■ Drugs: Smuggling	100
■ Kidney Cancer	89	■ Educational Visits: EU Countries	101
■ Members: Correspondence	90	■ Fraud	101
■ Mental Health Services: Children	90	■ Human Rights: Postgraduate Education	101
■ Mental Health Services: Doctors	91	■ Immigration: Armed Forces	102
■ Mental Health Services: Hospital Beds	91	■ Immigration: EU Nationals	102
■ Mental Health Services: Nurses	91	■ Immigration: Glasgow	104
■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists	92	■ Licensing Laws: Sexual Offences	104
■ NHS 111	92	■ Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: Scotland	105
■ NHS and Social Services: Migrant Workers	92	■ Overseas Students: English Language	105
■ NHS: Migrant Workers	93	■ Overseas Students: Self-employed	106
■ NHS: Ventilators	93	■ Police	106
■ Obesity: Coronavirus	93	■ Police: Finance	107
■ Pharmacy: Finance	94	■ Refugees: Children	108
■ Pregnancy: Screening	95	■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes	109
■ Social Services: Reform	95	■ Travellers: Caravan Sites	109
■ Surgery: Waiting Lists	95	■ UK Border Force: Shipping	109
■ Tobacco	95	■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel	110
■ Travel: Coronavirus	96	■ Visas	110
■ Weddings: Social Distancing	96	■ Visas: Hong Kong	110
■ Yellow Card Scheme	97	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	111
HOME OFFICE	97	■ Build Out Rates Independent Review	111
■ Antisemitism: Demonstrations	97	■ Building Safety Fund	111
■ Armed Forces: Immigration	97	■ Business Premises: Coronavirus	111
■ Asylum: Finance	98		
■ Asylum: Housing	98		
■ Crime and Justice Task Force	99		
■ Drugs: Misuse	99		

■ Decent Homes Standard Review	112	■ Offences against Children: Prison Sentences	123
■ Housing: Insulation	112	■ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Wales	124
■ Housing: Planning Permission	113	■ Prosecutions	124
■ Private Rented Housing	113	■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings	125
■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions	113	■ Sexual Offences: Criminal Proceedings	125
■ Public Works Loan Board: Housing Revenue Accounts	114	■ Television Licences: Non-payment	126
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	115	NORTHERN IRELAND	128
■ Agricultural Products: Import Duties	115	■ Northern Ireland Office: Advertising	128
■ Aluminium: Antidumping Duties	115	SCOTLAND	129
■ Electric Vehicles: Import Duties	116	■ Lord Advocate	129
■ Energy Charter	116	TRANSPORT	130
■ Overseas Trade: Albania	117	■ Airports: Social Distancing	130
■ Overseas Trade: Australia	117	■ Aviation: Belarus	130
■ Overseas Trade: Jordan	118	■ Aviation: Coronavirus	130
■ Overseas Trade: Lebanon	118	■ Aviation: India	131
■ Riot Control Weapons: Oman	118	■ Hitachi Rail: Redundancy	131
■ Trade Agreements	118	■ Joint Maritime Security Centre	132
■ Trade Agreements: Kuwait	119	■ Leamside Railway Line: Environmental Impact Assessment	132
■ Trade Agreements: Nepal	119	■ Motorways: Accidents	133
JUSTICE	120	■ Motorways: Road Signs and Markings	133
■ Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020	120	■ Network Rail: Finance	133
■ Family Courts: Custody	121	■ Northwich Station: Repairs and Maintenance	134
■ Family Courts: Disclosure of Information	121	■ Plastics: Pollution	134
■ Foston Hall Prison: Pregnancy	122	■ Public Transport: Safety	135
■ KRW Law and Madden and Finucane: Legal Aid Scheme	122	■ Railway Stations: Visual Impairment	135
■ Legal Profession: North East	123	■ Railways: Greater London	136

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance	136	■ Pensions Regulator: Universities Superannuation Scheme	149
■ Railways: Risk Assessment	136	■ Social Security Benefits: Disability	149
■ Roads: Safety	136	■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification	150
■ Trains: Hitachi	137	■ State Retirement Pensions: Females	150
■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus	137	■ Support for Mortgage Interest	151
TREASURY	138	■ Universal Credit	151
■ Buildings: Fire Prevention	138	■ Universal Credit: Debts	152
■ Economic Situation: South East	138	■ Universal Credit: Domestic Abuse	152
■ Equitable Life Assurance Society	139	■ Work Capability Assessment	154
■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence	140	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	155
■ Welfare State: Reform	140	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	155
WALES	141	■ Flood Control	155
■ Regional Planning and Development: Wales	141	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	156
■ Trade Agreements: Wales	142	BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	156
WORK AND PENSIONS	142	■ Publication In Draft - Downstream Oil Resilience Bill	156
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	142	CABINET OFFICE	157
■ Children: Poverty	143	■ Eighth Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee	157
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Self-employed	144	■ First Meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council	158
■ Disability: Public Consultation	144	DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	159
■ Jobcentres: Coronavirus	145	■ Update on review into the regulation of BetIndex Ltd	159
■ Jobcentres: Opening Hours	146		
■ Kickstart Scheme	146		
■ Kickstart Scheme: Equality	148		
■ Kickstart Scheme: Glasgow	148		
■ Kickstart Scheme: Hertfordshire	149		

HOME OFFICE	160	TRANSPORT	161
■ Independent verification of the Compliance Improvement Review	160	■ Local Transport Update	161
		■ Motoring Services Agencies Business Plans 2021-22	163

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

■ **Belt and Road Initiative: China**

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[7206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1109 on Belt and Road Initiative: China, which Belt and Road Initiative projects the Belt and Road Initiative Strategic Oversight Board is engaging with; within which countries it is engaging with those projects; and with which companies it is engaging with as part of those projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Belt and Road Initiative Strategic Oversight Board is not engaging directly with any Belt and Road Initiative projects. The Board provides an oversight function across Government, seeking to ensure UK engagement with the BRI considers the wider spectrum of UK interests, the strategic context, and priorities such as adherence to international standards, particularly with regard to environmental and social issues, debt-sustainability and transparency.

■ **Business: Government Assistance**

Virginia Crosbie:

[7989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing support to former business owners whose businesses have been liquidated as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and who are unable to start new business ventures as a result of that liquidation disqualifying them from obtaining insurance and other basic business support.

Paul Scully:

There is no legislation in the Insolvency Act or Company Directors Disqualification Act that would disqualify a business owner from obtaining insurance and other business support solely as a result of their previous company being subject to liquidation proceedings. A business owner in this position would have access to support from the Government, such as that provided through Growth Hubs and the free Business Support Helpline, on the same terms as any other business. Individual lenders and insurers may have policies in place that would take account of a previous insolvency and this would be a commercial matter for them.

Businesses of all sizes and all stages of growth can access free support and advice from their local Growth Hub, led by Local Enterprise Partnerships in England. Contact details can be found online: www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/. Firms based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have access to similar support through their devolved governments: www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Re-employment

Seema Malhotra:

[8609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of employers in receipt of covid-19 loans and grants under the Coronavirus Job Retention Support Scheme who have engaged in fire and rehire tactics.

Paul Scully:

The Government has taken substantial action to support jobs during the pandemic, most notably through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The scheme is available to those businesses that have been unable to maintain their workforce because their operations have been affected by COVID-19.

We have consistently condemned the inappropriate use of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic. We would all agree that the best outcome is for employers and employees to jointly negotiate new terms and conditions, and every effort should be made by all parties to achieve this. There are laws around how this must be done, and legal protections in place when firms are considering redundancies.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Sarah Owen:

[7288]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to ensure covid-19 booster vaccinations keep up with potential new variants.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is taking a number of steps to ensure the UK is prepared to respond to current and emerging COVID-19 variants as quickly as possible. This includes:

- Working closely with vaccine manufacturers and Public Health England (PHE) to understand the efficacy of our current vaccine portfolio against new variants. In order to support this, in May 2021 the Government announced £29.3 million funding to boost PHE/Porton Down's vaccine efficacy testing capability, including against different virus variants;
- Supporting vaccine manufacturers who have decided to develop variant vaccines; and
- Commissioning the Centre for Process Innovation's National Biologics Manufacturing Centre to create a 'variant mRNA library' to shorten the pathway to deployment of a licensed vaccine. In order to support this, at Budget 2021 the Government announced funding of an additional £5 million on top of a previous £9 million

The Government has confirmed we are planning for a booster programme to take place this autumn. The Vaccine Taskforce is working closely with the Department for Health and Social Care and the National Health Service on this booster programme. The Government will publish further details on the booster programme in due course

and the final policy will be informed by advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

■ **Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[7281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent representations his Department has received from the Scottish Government on transmission charges.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS Ministers and officials are in regular contact with colleagues in the Scottish Government on a range of energy related matters, including transmission charges. I know the Scottish Government has also been engaging closely with Ofgem, which oversees transmission charging as the independent energy regulator. Ofgem is currently progressing a review of network charging arrangements. All parties recognise the significant role that transmission charges play in the Net Zero transition, and Ofgem is taking this into account in its consideration of these matters.

■ **Employment: Scotland**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[8745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations she has received from the Scottish Government on devolving employment legislation.

Paul Scully:

While employment law is a reserved matter under the Scotland Act 1998, we continue to work with the Scottish Government respecting their unique settlements to ensure we build a strong economy across the United Kingdom.

Ministers and officials from both the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department of Work and Pensions hold regular meetings with counterparts in the devolved administrations to discuss various employment-related issues, including regular reviews of the legislative framework. We will update Parliament accordingly when there are plans to review legislation.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[7741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that signal strength is strong enough to support smart meter installation in all areas.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Second generation smart meters use a dedicated national smart metering communications network, which deploys a variety of technologies to deliver

connectivity to premises. These include cellular mobile technology plus wireless mesh radio, and long-range radio technology.

The Data Communications Company (DCC), which operates the national communications infrastructure for smart metering, is obligated under the conditions of its licence to provide communications coverage to at least 99.25% of premises across Great Britain.

The DCC is required by its licence conditions to assess the opportunities to increase the overall level of coverage beyond its contractual requirements, where it is practicable and cost proportionate.

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[7742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's target is for smart meter installations by the end of 2021.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Smart meters are replacing traditional gas and electricity meters in Great Britain as part of an essential infrastructure upgrade to make the energy system more efficient and flexible, enabling the cost-effective delivery of net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The rollout is making good progress, with 24.2 million smart and advanced meters in homes and small business across Great Britain as of end March 2021.

Energy suppliers are currently required by licence conditions to take all reasonable steps to install smart meters in homes and small businesses. The Government has confirmed that a new four-year policy framework with fixed annual installation targets for energy suppliers will commence on 1 January 2022 to drive the consistent, long-term investment needed to achieve market-wide rollout.

■ Help to Grow Scheme

Seema Malhotra: [\[8605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Help to Grow: Management programme announced in Budget 2021, what estimate he has made of the number of expressions of interest by SMEs in that programme to date.

Paul Scully:

The Help to Grow Management scheme has received 9,299 expressions of interest between the Budget announcement on 3 March 2021 and 28 May 2021.

■ Innovation

Grahame Morris: [\[7145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to hold a public consultation on the Innovation Strategy.

Amanda Solloway:

In the recently published 'Build Back Better: our plan for growth', published alongside the Budget, we announced the publication of a new Innovation Strategy in the summer.

As well as working across Government and with our Innovation Expert Group, BEIS has been engaging with the innovation community on the development of this work, to ensure the evidence base is sound and the policy proposals in the Strategy are well developed. As part of this process, BEIS has met with over 300 organisations and businesses already.

Our engagement with the community will continue during the implementation phase after the publication of the Strategy and beyond we look to drive innovation across the UK.

■ Iron and Steel: Safeguard Measures**Seema Malhotra:**[\[8606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on the (a) Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate's Statement of Intended Final Determination published on 19 May 2021 and (b) impact of that statement on the economic and public interests of the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

BEIS Ministers and officials have regular discussions with their counterparts in the Department for International Trade on a range of issues of mutual interest, including on trade and steel.

The Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) will make a final recommendation before the UK steel safeguard measures are due to expire on 30 June 2021. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade may only reject a recommendation to impose a measure if she considers that it is not in the public interest or that the economic interest test has not been met. If this happens, the Secretary of State must lay down her reasons to Parliament.

She can accept or reject a TRA recommendation as a whole but not modify or partially accept it. She cannot extend a measure if the TRA does not recommend this.

Seema Malhotra:[\[8607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on extending the UK's steel safeguards beyond the expiry date of 30 June 2021.

Seema Malhotra:[\[8608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact on the steel industry of not extending the UK's current steel safeguards beyond the expiry date of 30 June 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

BEIS Ministers and officials have regular discussions with their counterparts in the Department for International Trade on a range of issues of mutual interest, including on trade and steel. The Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) will make a recommendation on whether to extend or revoke the UK steel safeguard measures which are due to expire on 30 June 2021. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade can either accept or reject the recommendation as a whole, but not modify or partially accept it. She cannot extend the measures if the TRA does not recommend this.

Life Sciences**Grahame Morris:**[\[7144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to hold a public consultation on the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The 2017 Life Sciences Strategy was a joint document between industry and the Government. It was written following significant engagement with organisations, companies, and charities across the life sciences sector. Further to the publication of the Government's Plan for Growth, we are now developing a new Life Sciences Vision, together with industry and the wider sector, which will build on the successes of the 2017 Strategy.

In developing the Life Sciences Vision, the Department is undertaking extensive engagement with stakeholders representing small and large businesses, charities, patient interest groups, and businesses representative organisations around the country, as well as the NHS and the devolved administrations.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas: Bottles**Drew Hendry:**[\[8654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with energy providers on the current availability of gas cylinder bottles for domestic users who are reliant on the bottles for (a) heating and (b) cooking.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department are aware that there are some liquefied petroleum gas cylinder availability issues at present, but the industry considers that the impact on domestic customers for heat and cooking is low, as suppliers have mitigating measures in place. Officials are continuing to monitor the situation.

Those customers with empty or unused cylinders can assist by returning them to the relevant companies.

■ Local Government: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Helen Hayes: [\[7883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to promote the role of local government in delivering the national net zero target at COP26.

Helen Hayes: [\[8682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) potential contribution of local government (i) in delivering the national net zero target and (ii) to COP26, (b) effectiveness of the existing framework for local delivery of that target and (c) resources that will be needed to support local delivery of that target.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognises that local government can drive progress towards our national climate change commitments, and we are committed to working closely with them to ensure their role in delivering net zero targets are promoted at COP26.

Since 2017, BEIS has invested almost £22m in the Local Energy Programme, which is designed to build local capacity, capability and encourage joined-up working between local areas, investors and central government on decarbonisation and clean growth. Further details of how we intend to work with local government to reach net zero will be set out in the Net Zero Strategy, to be published prior to COP26.

■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme: Wales

Beth Winter: [\[8761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) existing and (b) former recipients of the mineworkers' pension scheme live in (i) Cynon Valley, (ii) Rhonda Cynon Taf, and (iii) Wales.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The mineworkers' pension scheme is not administered by the Government but by the Scheme Trustees. The Department does not, therefore, hold this information and such requests should be made to the Trustees.

However, I understand that the Trustees have already provided some information on scheme membership, including post codes, to the House of Commons Library. The Library should therefore be able to provide the information sought for existing scheme members.

■ National Digital Twin Programme: Finance

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[7078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will adopt the Institution of Civil Engineers' recent recommendation that increased funding should be made available for the National Digital Twin Programme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) are widely recognised for providing leadership to the increased digitalisation of the construction sector and the wider built environment. Innovative digital and information management techniques have already proven to deliver improved sector performance and operational efficiency from our national infrastructure. In future, these will significantly contribute to delivering our Net Zero Carbon commitments.

This is why, in collaboration with industry and academia, the Department is supporting programmes to develop new digital techniques, standards and guidance including funding the National Digital Twin Programme (NDTP). Therefore, we welcome ICE's support for the NDTP, and we will continue to work with them and other stakeholders to take this forward.

■ Natural Gas: Carbon Emissions**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[7763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to support the development of the geo-engine in the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Titan Electricity based in Birkenhead manufacture the geo-engine for extracting power from the heat in extracted natural gas. This low-carbon power can be used to separate carbon dioxide and other contaminants from the natural gas and return them underground for long term storage.

The geo-engine could help achieve the ambitious decarbonisation targets set in the North Sea Transition Deal for offshore gas published by BEIS in March. This commits the UK offshore oil and gas sector to a carbon dioxide production emission reduction of 10% in 2025, 25% in 2027, and 50% in 2030 compared to a 2018 baseline.

Geo-engine has benefited from innovation support in its development through UK Research and Innovation. For example, Innovate UK funded Croft Filters in conjunction with Titan Electricity to develop a gas filter which will withstand the extremely hostile conditions the geo-engine will operate within.

■ Research Bureaucracy Review**Grahame Morris:**[\[7788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans for there to be a public consultation as part of the review of research bureaucracy.

Amanda Solloway:

The Review of Research Bureaucracy has been engaging broadly across the research sector. The intention is to launch a call for evidence to build on this initial engagement.

■ Research Bureaucracy Review: Animal Experiments

Grahame Morris:

[\[7787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the development of the review of research bureaucracy, what recent discussions he has had with third sector organisations that are working to reduce and replace animal experiments.

Amanda Solloway:

The Review of Research Bureaucracy is continuing its evidence gathering across the research sector. To date, there have been no discussions with third sector organisations about animal experiments.

The use of animals in research is carefully regulated and remains important in ensuring new medicines and treatments are safe. At the same time, the Government believes that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and it actively supports and funds the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). This is achieved primarily through funding for the National Centre for the 3Rs, which works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of 3Rs technologies and ensure that advances in the 3Rs are reflected in policy, practice and regulations on animal research. Across the UK, the NC3Rs has invested £71 million in research through grants to universities, and almost £27 million in contracts through its CRACK IT Challenges innovation scheme to UK and EU-based institutions, mainly focusing on new approaches for the safety assessment of pharmaceuticals and chemicals that reduce the use of animals.

■ Research: Finance

Grahame Morris:

[\[7146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much and what proportion of the Government's £14.9 billion funding for research and development in 2021-22 will be allocated to developing non-animal methods of testing.

Amanda Solloway:

Overall Government spending on R&D in 2021/22 is at its highest level in four decades, this means UK scientists will have access to more public funding than ever before.

We recognise the importance of the independence of researchers and our investment in multiple disciplines and methodologies will be guided by experts.

We are not able to provide figures on the proportion of R&D funding dedicated to developing non-animal methods of testing as funding is not categorised in this way.

Grahame Morris:

[\[7147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Government has allocated to research and development; and how much and

what proportion of that funding was dedicated to animal-free science in each of the last five years for which records are available.

Amanda Solloway:

Overall Government spending on R&D in 2021/22 is £14.9 billion, its highest level in four decades.

The Office for National Statistics publishes historical figures on research and development expenditure by the UK Government on their website.

We are not able to provide figures on the proportion of R&D funding dedicated to developing animal-free science as funding is not categorised in this way.

■ **UN Climate Conference 2021: Urban Areas**

Helen Hayes:

[\[7886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's objectives are for the cities and built environment theme for the COP; and how the Government is engaging with UK cities in delivering on those objectives at COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

All of the theme days for COP26 are in the early stages of planning, including the cities, regions and built environment day. We will work with a wide range of domestic and international stakeholders in the delivery of all theme days.

■ **Unfair Dismissal: Temporary Employment**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[8689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to expand access to unfair dismissal for temporary and agency workers who are not considered to be employees.

Paul Scully:

The UK has one of the best employment rights records in the world. We have made good progress in bringing forward measures that add flexibility for workers while ensuring the protection of employment rights, such as banning the use of exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts.

An individual's employment rights are determined by their employment status (employee, limb (b) worker or self-employed). Employees are entitled to all rights including unfair dismissal (subject to qualifying periods) and have responsibilities towards their employer. So-called "limb (b) workers" are only entitled to some rights such as the National Minimum Wage but have increased flexibility and fewer obligations to their employer. The self-employed generally have no employment rights but have complete flexibility in their work. We believe our three-tiered Employment Status structure provides the right balance for the UK Labour Market.

■ Water Power: Finance**Dr Alan Whitehead:****[7070]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2860, what number of wave and tidal stream technologies have been successful in competing in previous Contracts for Difference auctions.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The CfD scheme's success has in part been down to the competitive nature of auctions. To date, no wave or tidal stream projects have been successful in a Contracts for Difference allocation round.

The Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC) keeps a register which contains a record of all projects which have been successful in previous allocation rounds. This can be found at <https://www.lowcarboncontracts.uk/cfds>.

Dr Alan Whitehead:**[7071]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2860, whether the parameters for the next allocation round of Pot 2 Contracts for Difference auctions will change to support the development of wave and tidal stream technologies.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Wave and tidal stream projects remain eligible to compete in Pot 2 for Contracts for Difference auctions. We will publish specific allocation round parameters in advance of the next auction, including consideration of technology-specific minima.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans**Dr Alan Whitehead:****[7072]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2856, what assessment his Department has made of the potential pipeline of floating wind projects which could be developed by (a) 2030 and (b) 2040.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government has a target of 1GW of floating wind by 2030.

In addition to the (operational) Hywind and (under construction) Kincardine projects, there are a number of projects at an earlier stage of development – Blyth, Erebus and Pentland.

The current ScotWind seabed leasing process is expected to result in a number of potential floating wind projects. The number, size and locations of potential projects will not be known until the ScotWind process is completed.

The Crown Estate is currently designing new seabed leasing for floating wind projects in the Celtic Sea, focusing on projects of 300MW. The number, size and locations of potential projects will not be known until the process is completed.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[7073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applicants submitted proposals to the offshore wind manufacturing investment scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

On 6 October my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced £160m to support offshore wind and infrastructure across the UK. We announced in March an investment of up to £75m for developing port infrastructure on the Humber and up to £20m for further investment on Teesside.

The UK Government also launched the Offshore Wind Investment Programme on the 22 February to support the delivery of manufacturing investment in the offshore wind supply chain. Whilst the scheme is still running I cannot comment further.

CABINET OFFICE

■ 11 Downing Street: Repairs and Maintenance

Cat Smith:

[\[7856\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 3021, who was the private supplier responsible for the works funded personally by the Prime Minister.

Julia Lopez:

Works funded personally by the Prime Minister were contracted privately; there has been no cost to taxpayers.

Under successive administrations, it has been the case that spending funded personally by the incumbent Prime Minister is a private matter.

In the same way, MPs' expenses which are funded by taxpayers are made public and rightly subject to public scrutiny; however, how Hon. Members spend their earned income is a private matter for them.

Cat Smith:

[\[7857\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the renovations and refurbishment of the Downing Street flat, how much of the £30,000 annual public grants allocated by his Department for that purpose has been spent.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer by my noble friend, Lord True (Minister of State at the Cabinet Office), to [PQHL14191](#) on 23 April 2021.

■ Africa and African Union: G7**Stephen Doughty:** [\[7829\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which representatives of individual African countries or the African Union will be taking part in discussions at the upcoming G7 meeting in Cornwall either physically or virtually.

Penny Mordaunt:

President Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa will be attending the upcoming G7 Summit in Carbis Bay.

■ Blood: Contamination**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[6207\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether people affected by contaminated blood products will have access to legal representation for the infected blood compensation framework review.

Penny Mordaunt:

The compensation framework study will provide advice on potential compensation framework design and solutions to Government. It is important that Sir Robert Francis QC, the independent reviewer, is able to complete his work as quickly as thoroughness allows.

At the outset of the Infected Blood Inquiry, the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster decided that it was overwhelmingly in the public interest that legal representation for infected and affected core participants in the inquiry should be funded by Government, and without means testing. This funding will continue until the conclusion of the Inquiry. However, this study is quite separate from the Inquiry. Sir Robert will want to hear directly from infected and affected people and put them at the heart of the process. Legal representation will not be required in order to put forward views.

■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[7226\]](#)

To ask the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will ensure that the proposed public inquiry into the covid-19 outbreak includes an assessment of the effect of the outbreak on disabled people.

Rachael Maskell: [\[8661\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how he plans to engage with families that have been bereaved as a result of the covid-19 outbreak to ensure that they can contribute to the scope of the proposed inquiry into that outbreak.

Rachael Maskell: [\[8662\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to ensure that hon. Members are consulted on the scope of proposed public inquiry into the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachael Maskell: [\[8663\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to ensure that NHS staff are consulted on the scope of the proposed public inquiry into the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachael Maskell: [\[8664\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to ensure that representatives of local (a) authorities and (b) resilience forums are consulted on the scope of the proposed public inquiry into the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachael Maskell: [\[8665\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to appoint the chair of the proposed public inquiry into the covid-19 outbreak; and what consultation process he plans to hold prior to appointing that role.

Julia Lopez:

Throughout the pandemic, we have been guided by data and scientific advice and have acted quickly and decisively to save lives and livelihoods.

Every death from this virus is a tragedy and our sympathies are with everyone who has lost loved ones.

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed to this House that a public inquiry into COVID-19 would be established on a statutory basis, with full formal powers, and that it will begin its work in spring 2022.

Further details, including terms of reference, will be set out in due course.

Throughout the pandemic, senior ministers, including the Prime Minister, have met and will continue to meet with bereaved families.

■ **Crown Commercial Service: Contracts**

Chris Stephens: [\[R\] \[7859\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) has asked the companies that are part of its Facilities Management Marketplace whether they had financial links with (a) Greensill Capital and (b) other supply chain financing providers; and what assessment the CCS has made of the financial stability of those companies.

Chris Stephens: [\[R\] \[7861\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Crown Commercial Service will assess in future, as part of its due diligence

checks on companies wishing to join the Facilities Management Marketplace, whether they have financial links with supply chain financing providers.

Julia Lopez:

The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) did not ask companies that are part of its Facilities Management Marketplace whether they have had financial links with (a) Greensill Capital and (b) other supply chain financing providers.

The financial assessment of suppliers who are part of the Facilities Management Marketplace is undertaken using Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) checks, amongst other internal checks. The Facilities Management Marketplace framework has three lots (lots 1a - c) of which each has their own D&B risk threshold that suppliers are required to meet. This is monitored by CCS framework management and commercial finance teams. Where suppliers fall below the minimum D&B credit rating threshold, further investigation is undertaken which may result in a Financial Distress event as per the terms and conditions of the framework.

There is no intention in the future to assess, as part of its due diligence checks on companies wishing to join the Facilities Management Marketplace, whether suppliers have financial links with supply chain financing providers.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Correspondence**

Afzal Khan:

[\[8730\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 6457 on Department of Work and Pensions: Correspondence, when data on the timeliness of responses to hon. Members from Government departments and agencies will be made available to hon. Members.

Julia Lopez:

Further to the answer to [PQ6450](#) on 27 May 2021, we expect this data to be released and made available to members ahead of Parliament rising for Summer recess.

■ **Emergencies: Mobile Phones**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[8713\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 3121 on Emergencies: Mobile Phones, if he will make it his Department's policy that hon. Members are notified of alerts issued to their constituents through the Emergency Alerts Service either simultaneously or immediately afterwards, whichever ensures that there is no delay to constituents' receipt of that alert.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[8714\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 3121 on Emergencies: Mobile Phones, whether he has plans to assess the potential effect of the Emergency Alerts Service issued alert on telecommunication capacity in emergency areas as a result of any

significant increase in access to the telecommunication demand following recipients' receipt of an alert, including a significant surge in (a) phone calls, (b) messages and (c) access to data and links provided through the alert.

Penny Mordaunt:

Further to the Written Ministerial Statement published on 17 May 2021, we will consider how best to inform Hon. Members as part of the ongoing development of protocols for use.

To date, experience in other countries indicates that phone networks can handle a rise in calls made after an alert is sent. The number of phones which receive an alert has no impact on the Emergency Alert system - a number of countries conduct similar nationwide tests with no negative impact. Links embedded in alerts will always refer to the gov.uk website, which has been designed in a way to handle significantly higher rates of visits than normal websites and has been proven to be able to handle millions of visits in the seconds after announcements are made.

■ **Government Property Agency: Contracts**

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[7208\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government Property Agency (GPA) has asked the Facility Management companies it contracts services from whether they had any financial links with Greensill Capital or have links with another supply chain financing provider; and what assessment the GPA has made of the financial stability of such companies.

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[7860\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government Property Agency will in future, as part of its due diligence checks on facility management companies it wishes to contract with, assess whether they have financial links with supply chain financing providers.

Julia Lopez:

The Government Property Agency has not asked our facilities management suppliers whether they have, or have had, any financial links to Greensill Capital or another supply chain financing provider.

GPA's principal suppliers are government strategic suppliers; the Cabinet Office Market and Suppliers team closely monitors the financial health of these strategic suppliers and has regular discussions with their management.

GPA procurement processes are aligned with legal and commercial policy requirements. At the moment, there is no requirement to specifically enquire about company links with supply chain financing providers as part of due diligence.

■ Press Conferences: Sign Language

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[7232\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of including British Sign Language interpreters at all Downing Street press briefings.

Julia Lopez:

As a matter of practice, the BBC has, since March 2020, provided BSL interpretation on its News Channel in respect of the vast majority of Covid media briefings, and continues to do so. A clean feed of the BSL interpretation has, since May, been made available for use on government social media channels.

In the relatively rare event that the BBC chooses not to provide BSL interpretation, we will be notified in advance of the briefing. We will then arrange for an independent organisation to provide BSL interpretation of the briefing in question, further to an arrangement that came into effect on 26 November. That BSL interpretation will be made available on government social media channels (including the No 10 YouTube channel). It will also be made available to broadcasters and other media outlets for TV and social media channels.

COP26

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Local Government

Helen Hayes:

[\[7884\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he plans to take to engage with local government over the coming months to ensure local government is effectively represented at COP26.

Helen Hayes:

[\[7885\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what meetings he has held with councils and local government organisations on (A) the role of local government in meeting the national net zero target, and (b) how that role will be communicated at COP26.

Alok Sharma:

We are continuing to engage with local authorities and leaders across the UK through the UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council, which most recently met on 15 March. We also work closely with a number of a number of Non-State Actor organisations such as the C40 Cities, ICLEI and UK100 to help further engage with local authorities.

The Government is still in the process of developing the programme for the Cities, Regions and Built Environment Day at COP26, which will showcase the key role that they all play in the pathway to net zero. I look forward to working with members of the UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council to develop the programme.

DEFENCE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:****[7821]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when UK armed forces are planned to leave Afghanistan.

James Heappey:

NATO partners, including the UK, confirmed on 14 April that an orderly and coordinated withdrawal of NATO forces will begin by May. As agreed by NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers, the withdrawal of Resolute Support Mission forces from Afghanistan will be complete within a few months. The UK's Operation TORAL forms a part of the Resolute Support Mission and as such we will draw down this operation in line with our NATO Allies and Partners. No decisions have been made on any future presence.

Our support and training of Afghan institutions, including the National Directorate of Security, Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army has strengthened the ability of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) to counter security threats. That and other capacity-building work are aimed at increasing the self-reliance of Afghan forces in the fight against terrorism and other threats. Despite significant challenges, Afghan forces have led security in Afghanistan since 2014.

■ **Apache AH-64 Helicopters: Guided Weapons****Mr Kevan Jones:****[7753]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what air-to-ground missile will UK Army Air Corps Apache AH-64E aircraft be equipped with.

Jeremy Quin:

The Joint Air-to-Ground Missile (JAGM) for the new AH-64E Future Attack Helicopter has been selected. This missile is designed for helicopter use and is already integrated within the aircraft, simulators and mission planning systems. In addition to JAGM, the Hellfire K1 and Hellfire Romeo missiles will also be fully qualified and integrated onto the aircraft.

■ **Armed Forces: Foreign Nationals****Jamie Stone:****[7899]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of Commonwealth nationals serving in the armed forces have served in the armed forces for four or more years.

Leo Docherty:

The table below provides the number and proportion of Commonwealth nationals in the trained and trade trained Regular Armed Forces as at 1 January 2021, who have

served four or more years. Nepal is not a member of the Commonwealth so the data does not include Nepalese citizens including Gurkhas.

Table 1: The strength of UK trained and trade trained ¹ Regulars ² with a Commonwealth ³ Nationality ^{4,5} having served for 4 or more years ⁶, as at 1 Jan 2021.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMONWEALTH SERVICE PERSONNEL	NUMBER OF TRAINED AND TRADE TRAINED REGULAR COMMONWEALTH PERSONNEL WHO HAVE SERVED 4 OR MORE YEARS	WHICH REPRESENTS AS A PROPORTION OF ALL TRAINED AND TRADE TRAINED REGULAR COMMONWEALTH PERSONNEL ⁷
All Services	5,080	2,200	43%
Royal Navy/Royal Marines	860	350	41%
Army	4070	1,770	44%
RAF	140	70	50%

Caveats/Notes:

1. The table above includes Army personnel that are defined as Trade Trained and RAF and Royal Navy personnel that are defined as Trained. Within the Army from 1 October 2016, UK regular forces and Gurkha personnel who have completed both their Phase 1 (basic service training) and Phase 2 training (trade training), are considered trade trained personnel. Within the Royal Navy and RAF 'Trained' personnel have completed both Phase 1 and Phase 2 training.

2. UK Regulars comprise Full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), High Readiness Reserve (HRR) and Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) personnel.

3. The Commonwealth grouping includes all personnel with a nationality, as recorded on JPA at the time of publication, that is reported in the British Nationality Act 1981, SCHEDULE 3 (Countries Whose Citizens are Commonwealth Citizens), further information of which is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/61/schedule/3>. On the 12th November 2015, under the British Nationality (The Gambia) Order 2015, the Gambia was omitted from the Commonwealth. Figures relating to personnel with a nationality, as recorded on JPA, of Gambian are still included in the Irish and Commonwealth

grouping. For further information see:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/1771/contents/made>

4. As nationality is a non-mandatory field, nationality is as currently recorded and not necessarily the same as at birth or when recruited. Therefore, Commonwealth personnel who have changed nationality (for example naturalised to a British Citizen) may or may not have updated their JPA record.

5. The question has requested Commonwealth personnel only. This will differ from the Biannual Diversity Statistics, which provides a combined nationality breakdown of Commonwealth and Irish.

6. Length of service (LoS) was calculated using entry date. There are known problems with the entry date information extracted from JPA. If personnel have transferred from one service to another service, have served under an alternative assignment type (e.g. Reserve Forces), are re-entrants or have transferred from Other Ranks to Officers, their entry date may correspond to any of these events. The resulting LoS may reflect their current period of service, include previous service, or it may be the time that has elapsed since they first joined the armed forces, irrespective of any break in service. It will invariably include time spent on untrained strength.

7. These figures may not capture the full cohort of Commonwealth personnel who joined the UK Regular Forces, as a number of personnel may have changed from a Commonwealth nationality to a British nationality.

8. Figures in this table have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in a "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent the systematic bias caused by always rounding numbers upwards.

Stephanie Peacock: **[8695]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel with non-UK nationality left the armed forces in each of the last three years.

Stephanie Peacock: **[8696]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel with non-UK nationality left the armed forces after having served (a) less than four years, (b) four to 12 years and (c) 12 or more years in each of the last three years.

Leo Docherty:

The table below provides the number of Armed Forces Personnel with non-UK nationality who have left the Armed Forces in each of the last three years.

Table 1: Outflow ¹ of UK Regulars ² and Gurkhas with a Non UK Nationality ^{3, 4}

NATIONALITY	2018	2019	2020
Non UK	480	360	300
Unknown ⁵	40	130	250

The table below shows the number of years members of the Armed Forces have served before leaving the Armed Forces in each of the last three years.

Table 2: Outflow ¹ of UK Regulars ² and Gurkhas with a known Non UK Nationality ^{3,4} by Length of Service ⁶

LENGTH OF SERVICE (IN YEARS)	2018	2019	2020
0-3	40	50	110
4-11	300	190	90
12+	140	120	100
Total	480	360	300

Notes and Caveats

1. Outflow is derived by month-on-month comparisons of strength. These figures include outflow to specific populations including outflow to the Regular Armed Forces, or another reserve population not included in FR20. Personnel flowing from the Trained to the Untrained Strengths are not captured in this table. We capture individuals who intake and outflow within the same month. For example, if an individual joins on 3 March and leaves on 29 March they are counted as an intake and an outflow
2. UK Regulars comprise Full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), High Readiness Reserve (HRR) and Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) personnel. Includes trained and untrained personnel.
1. This applies to Commonwealth UK Regular Personnel, Gurkhas and those Nepalese who have transferred out of the Brigade of Gurkhas to serve in the wider Armed Forces. Non-UK has therefore been defined as comprising those nationalities. Irish and other nationalities are not included. This will differ from nationality data in the Biannual Diversity Statistics, which do not include Gurkha personnel or the full list of other nationalities.
4. Nationality at outflow as declared in the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). This may differ from Nationality at Birth.
5. Unknown refers to those with no known nationality recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration system.
6. Length of service has been calculated using entry date. There are known problems with the entry date information extracted from JPA. If personnel have transferred between Services, have served under an alternative assignment type (e.g. Reserve Forces), are re-entrants or have transferred from Other Ranks to Officers, their entry

date may correspond to any of these events. The resulting LoS may reflect their current period of service, include previous service, or it may be the time that has elapsed since they first joined the Armed Forces, irrespective of any break in service. It will invariably include time spent on untrained strength.

7. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 in line with disclosure control policy. Figures ending in 5 are rounded to the nearest 20 to avoid bias.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[8698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel with non-UK nationality were deployed in support of (a) Operation Herrick and (b) Operation Telic.

James Heappey:

A total of 10,110 Service personnel with Non-UK nationality were deployed in support of Operation HERRICK.

A total of 6,410 Service personnel with Non-UK nationality were deployed in support of Operation TELIC.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[8700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel with non-UK nationality have died as a result of a medal-earning operation in the last 20 years.

Leo Docherty:

From 1 January 2001 to 31 May 2021, a total of 692 UK Armed Forces personnel have died as a result of a medal earning operation. Of these 39 had a non-UK nationality recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration or Legacy systems. 50 deaths had no nationality recorded therefore the figure presented is a minimum.

■ Armed Forces: Immigration

Jamie Stone: [\[7901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he made of the potential merits of waiving the cost of fees for Leave to Remain for Commonwealth service leavers and their families.

Leo Docherty:

The Secretary of State greatly values the commitment and dedication of all those serving in our armed forces, including those from the Commonwealth and Nepal. He understands the financial impact visa fees have on Non-UK Service Personnel wishing to remain in the UK after their service and that is why he and the Home Secretary launched a public consultation on this issue on 26 May 2021. The consultation is seeking views on a policy proposal for waiving settlement costs for non-UK service personnel. The consultation will run for six weeks and will close on 7 July 2021.

Stephanie Peacock:[\[8697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate the Government has made of the net cost of the implementation of his proposal relating to settlement fees applicable to non-UK Service Personnel leaving the UK armed forces and wishing to remain in the UK, published on 26 May 2021.

Leo Docherty:

The policy proposal outlined in the public consultation seeks to waive the current settlement application cost of £2,389 for Service personnel who have served a minimum of their initial engagement period of 12 years when they leave the UK Armed Forces. The number of non-UK Service personnel leaving at this point in their service varies each year.

Until the public consultation closes and a decision is made regarding the final policy, it is too early to know exactly how many non-UK Service personnel may be eligible for a fee waiver if they choose to settle in the UK on discharge and what the associated costs are likely to be.

■ Army: Employment**John Healey:**[\[7096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 7.34 of the Defence in a competitive age Command Paper, CP411, how many personnel will be allocated to the new experimentation battalion.

James Heapey:

The Ministry of Defence will prioritise more than £6.6 billion of research, development, and experimentation over the next four years so the Armed Forces can adapt to the threat with advanced technologies. As part of this, 2nd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment will rerole to become a new prototype warfighting and experimentation battalion. The Army will use spring and early summer 2021 to refine and test the designs, capabilities and structure of its units before making more detailed announcements later this year.

■ Chinook Helicopters: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[7752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason deliveries of the H-47 Extended Range Chinook helicopters are being delayed until 2026.

Jeremy Quin:

This order is part of the commitment made in the recent Defence Command Paper to invest over £85 billion on military equipment and support over the next four years as we reform and renew our Armed Forces. The cutting-edge H-47 (Extended Range) will be at the forefront of our specialist requirements in dealing with threats and logistic support. Our £1.4 billion investment will mean we will be one of very few air forces with this capability. The decision to accept delivery of the H-47 (ER) Chinook

Helicopters from 2026 is to enable us to maintain the overall balance of our modernisation priorities.

■ **Clyde Naval Base: Fire and Rescue Services**

Grahame Morris: [\[7789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date his Department received full approval from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for Capita to proceed to implement the proposed changes to fire-response crewing levels at HMNB Clyde.

Grahame Morris: [\[7790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that firefighters employed by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service received specialist training in nuclear-related incidents prior to their being expected to provide emergency cover to facilitate the adoption by Capita of a reduced crewing model at HMNB Clyde.

Grahame Morris: [\[7791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what risk assessment was undertaken prior to the decision to allow Capita to deploy a reduced crewing model in providing specialist fire services at the HMNB Clyde nuclear base; and if he will publish that assessment.

Jeremy Quin:

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have been engaged throughout Capita Fire and Rescue's (CFR's) development of the revised operating model at HMNB Clyde and have confirmed that they will continue to provide the same level of response as before. The SFRS has no role however in approving or endorsing the changes that have been introduced (and endorsed by DFR HQ and safety officials at Clyde). CFR's reductions to firefighter cover (from a six person 24/7 watch to a five person 24/7 watch) will not place any increased reliance on the SFRS, as the on-site fire and rescue provision is not being removed and is expected to continue to be able to deliver the same outputs if called upon. No requirement to increase SFRS training has therefore been identified.

Four practical exercises were conducted in November 2020, designed to test appropriate crewing levels and their ability to respond to a fire incident that could reasonably occur at Clyde. The exercises demonstrated to DFR HQ and safety officials at Clyde that the reduction in firefighter cover did not impact CFR's ability to respond effectively to these incidents. This activity formed the basis of a robust risk-based approach; however, the assessment cannot be published for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

■ **Defence Equipment: Sales**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[8767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much revenue has been generated through the sale of surplus military equipment via the Defence Equipment Sales Authority in each of the last five years.

Imran Ahmad Khan:[\[8768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a list of surplus military equipment which has been sold via the Defence Equipment Sales Authority in each of the last five years.

Jeremy Quin:

The Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA) handles a wide variety of equipment, from large platforms, such as warships, tanks and aircraft, to smaller assets, such as clothing and textiles, military spares, scrap metal and office/IT equipment. DESA processes, on average, in excess of 7,000 declarations each year. A declaration may cover a single item of military equipment or a list of thousands of smaller items. As such, a substantive response covering all individual items sold over the last five years cannot easily be provided.

The number of declarations and net income from the sale of surplus equipment over the last five financial years (FY) is as follows:

	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	TOTAL
Declarations	7,996	7,547	7,009	7,324	6,244	36,120
Net income £million ex- VAT	70.739	41.309	143.304	111.349	40.716	407.417

■ Defence: Technology

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[7756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to recent reports on the Australian Land200 programme, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) security of critical UK MoD systems and (b) interoperability of those systems with UK allies including the US.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence has comprehensive procedures in place to assess the security of critical systems, including robust System Accreditation procedures, security focussed System Requirements and commercial Defence Condition controls. The UK is constantly seeking to improve interoperability with its key allies, including the US, through a series of engagements ranging from Ministerial Memorandums of Agreement, through adherence to agreed international interoperability standards and participation on multinational exercises.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[7757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to recent reports on the Australian Land200 programme, what assessment his Department makes of the security of critical systems when acquiring those systems from overseas suppliers.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has robust procedures in place to assess the security of both critical systems and their suppliers, whether those systems are procured from overseas or within the UK. The MOD requires all suppliers to engage with the Defence Cyber Protection Partnership, which ensures cyber security controls in the supply chain are proportionate to the nature of the contract. The MOD further ensures that critical systems are designed and operated with proportionate security controls in place, through an accreditation process which begins at the design phase and is regularly assessed through life.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[7747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what percentage of the steel used in the construction of the new Fleet Solid Support ships will be British steel.

Jeremy Quin:

It is too early to say what the steel requirement for the Fleet Solid Support ships might be. Responsibility for sourcing steel for the ships will rest with the prime contractor, who will make their steel requirements known to the UK steel industry in line with Cabinet Office guidelines.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[7748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any area of the new Fleet Solid Support ships contract restricts the tender to UK-only bodies as a result of national security considerations.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has included security questions and requirements for all bidders to meet as part of its procurement documents. These are commensurate with the overall security requirements of the Fleet Solid Support ship programme including the installation of sensitive systems subject to national security considerations in the UK.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[7754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether intellectual property will be transferred to the UK with regard to the new Fleet Solid Support ships contract.

Jeremy Quin:

It is long-standing commercial policy for the Ministry of Defence to secure appropriate user rights in intellectual property, while leaving the ownership with industry.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[7755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what meetings (a) he has and (b) officials in his Department have had with relevant stakeholders on the reopening of the new Fleet Solid Support ships tender in the last three months.

Jeremy Quin:

Ministers and officials regularly meet defence industry representatives from the maritime sector to discuss a range of subjects. Industry has participated in a Market Engagement exercise, but it is too early to say which industrial entities will participate in the new Fleet Solid Support ship competition that commenced on 21 May 2021.

■ Hercules Aircraft: Special Forces**John Healey:**[\[7098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made about the effect of the decision to retire the C130 Hercules by 2023 on the operational capability of the Special Forces.

James Heappey:

It has been the longstanding position of successive Governments not to comment on the capabilities of the UK special forces, as to do so would put personnel and operations at risk.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Weapons**John Healey:**[\[7097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 56 of the Defence in a competitive age Command Paper, CP411, how many more UK weapons will be integrated onto the Lightning II aircraft; and which regions in the UK will benefit from that decision.

Jeremy Quin:

Alongside modifications to the fielded UK Paveway IV precision surface attack weapon, the current Programme of Record will deliver two new UK Weapons onto UK Lightning aircraft. These are the MBDA Meteor Beyond Visual Range Air to Air missile and the SPEAR Capability 3 precision surface attack missile. MBDA state that the Integration of these weapons will benefit their sites in Bolton, Bristol and Stevenage.

Future UK weapons, such as SPEAR Capability 5, will be considered for integration as part of the spiral development of UK Lightning to meet future threats, exploit multi-domain integration and expand utility.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Antisubmarine Warfare**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[7750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK ordered the High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare Capability for use on the P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

The RAF keeps its equipment requirements and capabilities under constant review. However, no decision has been taken about purchasing the High Altitude Anti-

Submarine Warfare Weapon Capability, which is currently under development for the United States Navy.

■ **Military Aircraft: Procurement**

Dave Doogan:

[8734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of Price Waterhouse Cooper's assessment that project Tempest will add £1 billion to the economy of the East of England; and what estimate he has made of the contribution to the Scottish economy of that project.

Jeremy Quin:

The Tempest programme is expected to generate long-term high value employment which can make a significant contribution to the UK Government's levelling up priorities and the wider economy.

An independent report commissioned by industry and produced by professional services firm, PwC, provides an assessment of gross value added and employment contribution of the Tempest region, based on direct and first-tier supplier spending only through 2021 - 2050. It does not make an assessment of the additional GVA and employment contribution below the direct first-tier level.

In Scotland the PwC report outlines a contribution of at least £828 million gross value added with at least 15,000 job years. This will create high value jobs and skills for decades.

The Combat Air sector generates £6 billion a year and employs thousands of workers across the UK. Tempest will exploit our industrial base to create a next generation combat air enterprise centred in the UK. The early preparatory work of the FCAS Technology Initiative and Team Tempest expected to secure employment for 1,800 people directly supporting the programme. Industry now estimate that figure has been exceeded, with over 2,000 people now engaged in Tempest enterprise activities alone across 300 different companies. More than 90% of these people are highly skilled scientists and engineers.

■ **Oman: Armed Forces**

Kenny MacAskill:

[7947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the number of UK military personnel based in Oman.

James Heappey:

The UK currently has approximately 230 military personnel based in Oman.

■ Oman: Demonstrations**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[7946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Chief of the Defence Staff and other UK military personnel have assisted the Omani authorities in responding to the recent protests in that country.

James Heapey:

UK military personnel have not assisted the Omani authorities in their response to the recent protests.

■ Oman: Military Aid**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[7948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any British Army personnel on loan to the Sultanate of Oman serve in military units that (a) operate or (b) maintain armoured vehicles.

James Heapey:

I am withholding details of the military units where the UK Loan Service in Oman are based as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and another state.

■ RAF Lossiemouth: Maritime Patrol Aircraft**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[7751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether there is a dedicated saltwater washdown facility or capability at RAF Lossiemouth for the P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

The Post-Flight Rinse Facility at RAF Lossiemouth for the Poseidon MRA1 uses fresh water to rinse salt spray from aircraft after completing the last flight of the day to prevent salt corrosion on the aircraft skin.

Additionally, separate facilities are available to provide a full external wash of the Poseidon aircraft as part of the standard maintenance regime for the aircraft.

■ RAF Valley: Red Arrows**Virginia Crosbie:** [\[7988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to move additional Red Arrows depth work to RAF Valley on Ynys Môn.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 19 April 2021 in response to Question 180656.

Attachments:

1. 180656 - Military Aircraft [180656 - Military Aircraft.docx]

Richard Paniguian

Zarah Sultana: [\[7292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Sir Richard Paniguian met defence ministers on 11 January 2016 at a session of the Gulf Advisory Committee or Gulf Advisory Council.

Jeremy Quin:

There was a meeting of the Gulf Advisory Group on 11 January 2016 of which Sir Richard Paniguian was an invitee. However, we hold no records of the minutes of this meeting and cannot therefore confirm attendance.

Submarines: Iron and Steel

John Healey: [\[7737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the location is of the site used to produce the pressure hull steel used in the production of the Trafalgar class and Vanguard class submarines.

Jeremy Quin:

The pressure hull steel used in the production of the Vanguard Class of submarine was predominantly sourced from the British Steel Corporation's Dalzell plant in Motherwell, Scotland. Owing to the time that has elapsed since the procurement of steel for the Trafalgar Class submarines, reliable information on the source is not readily available. However, it is likely that the pressure hull steel was produced by UK manufacturers.

Type 45 Destroyers: Operating Costs

John Healey: [\[7099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average cost to his Department is for each day a Type 45 Destroyer is at sea.

Jeremy Quin:

For a Type 45 that has been active throughout a full year (at sea and alongside), an indicative average daily operating cost is £0.126 million.

Warships: Shipbuilding

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[7749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on designating that UK warships must be built in the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) currently has no plans to bring forward legislation requiring that warships must be built in the UK. The MOD's shipbuilding policy was set out in the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, which stated that the procurement approach for each class of ship will be determined on a case-by-case basis. As well as considering the specific capability requirements, the MOD will

consider the long-term industrial impact of different options, including delivering value for money for the overall programme and maintaining the key industrial capabilities required for operational independence.

For national security reasons, the UK needs to maintain a shipbuilding enterprise with the industrial capabilities to design, manufacture, integrate, modify and support current and future naval ships (both Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary). Overall, the MOD considers that a regular drumbeat of design and manufacturing work in UK yards is needed to maintain the industrial capabilities important for UK national security and to drive efficiencies which will reduce longer-term costs in the shipbuilding portfolio.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Advertising: Internet

Sir Greg Knight:

[8555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the rules, restrictions and bans on advertising products or services in on-line adverts are as similar as possible to rules governing mainstream media advertising; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinéage:

Advertising standards in the UK are set out in the CAP (The UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing) and BCAP (The UK Code of Broadcast Advertising) codes. The BCAP code for broadcasting is enforced by a co-regulatory relationship between the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and Ofcom, where Ofcom acts as the ASA's legal backstop for broadcast advertising. This means failure of an advertiser to stick to an ASA ruling could result in them being referred to Ofcom, who have the power to take legal action. More information about this agreement can be found here:

<https://www.asa.org.uk/uploads/assets/23cc61df-e57c-4957-81ac15378b7730b7/mou-asa-ofcom.pdf>

For the CAP code for non-broadcast advertising, the ASA acts as the industry's self-regulator. My department is looking at the wider regulatory framework for advertising online through the Online Advertising Programme. In 2019 Government launched a call for evidence on this issue and we will be consulting on this later this year.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-advertising-call-for-evidence/online-advertising-call-for-evidence#introduction>

■ BBC: Royal Charters

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[8551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the terms of reference for the mid-term review of the Royal Charter for the continuance of the BBC.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Royal Charter sets out that the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport must determine the scope and terms of reference (including the timing) of the review following consultation with the BBC, Ofcom, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Northern Ireland Ministers.

The Mid-Term Review must not be undertaken before 2022 but the government has been clear that preparatory work will begin immediately.

■ Choirs: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell: [\[4552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on increasing the six person limit for indoor amateur choirs, where there is adequate space for social distancing.

Caroline Dinenage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Harriett Baldwin: [\[4593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what advice he received from the Chief Medical Office on preventing amateur choral singing in groups of more than six people under covid-19 restrictions; and what plans he has for that advice to be reviewed.

Caroline Dinenage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made

sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across the Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Jack Dromey: [\[5176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of easing covid-19 restrictions for amateur choirs.

Caroline Dinéage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. As set out in the roadmap, we hope to remove all legal limits on social contact at step 4. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Rachael Maskell: [\[5211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what evidence has been used to reach a decision that community singing cannot commence at Step 3 of the covid-19 lockdown easement roadmap.

Caroline Dinéage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across the government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. As set out in the roadmap, we hope to remove all legal limits on social contact at step 4. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Rachael Maskell:

[5212]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reasons the limit on the number of people singing together is different for professional and amateur singers in step three of the roadmap easing covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Rachael Maskell:

[5214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing more than 30 people in a community choir to sing outside as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Caroline Dinenge:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I want to assure you that everyone across the government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published. Professional activity can take place in larger numbers because it is work based activity and is exempt from legal gathering limits.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[5221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date indoor rehearsals of amateur singing choirs of more than six people will be permitted.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[5222]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason the guidance for the performing arts sector recently published by his Department diverges from previous guidance which stated that non-professional music activity could take place outdoors and indoors in England from 17 May 2021.

Caroline Dinenge:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Stephen Morgan: **[5252]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the clinical evidence was for the decision to lift the covid-19 social distancing restrictions on choral singing groups from 17 May 2021.

Stephen Morgan: **[5253]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the clinical evidence is for the decision to not to allow amateur choral singing groups of more than six people to meet.

Caroline Dinenage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across the Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. As set out in the roadmap, we hope to remove all legal limits on social contact at step 4. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Crispin Blunt: **[6166]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason covid-19 restrictions remain on the number of people who can sing together indoors.

Caroline Dinenage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Chris Grayling: **[7107]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will change covid-19 guidance to allow amateur choirs to rehearse together.

Caroline Dinéage:

Non-professional groups of up to six people can now sing indoors, and can perform or rehearse in groups of up to 30 outdoors. In addition, multiple groups of 30 can now sing outdoors, provided the groups are kept separate throughout the activity. This is an important step forward in the return of non-professional performing arts activity from Step 2.

It is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Robert Halfon: **[7150]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of revising covid-19 guidance to allow non-professional choral activities involving more than six people to take place indoors.

Caroline Dinéage:

I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

■ Commonwealth Games: Wales

Virginia Crosbie: **[7986]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits to the (a) Welsh economy and (b) tourism sector of Ynys Môn constituency of holding the Commonwealth Games in Wales.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games provide a unique and significant opportunity to accelerate economic growth and support the recovery of our tourism sectors across the UK after the impact of COVID-19. The government is working closely with our Games partners to ensure we make the most of these opportunities.

Central government is funding £594 million of the total £778 million investment into hosting the Commonwealth Games. This significant investment is driving legacy opportunities across both the West Midlands and UK, including job creation, visitor attraction and a timely boost to businesses. There is also a wealth of opportunities for the people of Wales to get involved in the Games, such as the Queen's Baton Relay, which will travel through Wales ahead of the Games, Games-time volunteering opportunities and potential business contracts.

An additional £24 million investment from the government and the West Midlands Combined Authority to create a Business and Tourism Programme will ensure the region and the UK can take advantage of the economic opportunities hosting the Games provides. Fully integrated with the Games, the Business And Tourism Programme will use the event's profile to boost our global reputation as a leading destination for tourism, trade, and investment.

The matter of a bid for a future Commonwealth Games in Wales would be a matter for the Welsh government.

■ Company Liquidations: Wakefield**Imran Ahmad Khan:****[8772]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 3199 on Company Liquidations: West Yorkshire, how many business operating in Wakefield published a first or second notice in the London Gazette in each financial year between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The National Archives has reviewed notices placed in The London Gazette in each financial year between 2015-16 and 2018-19 in order to answer this question.

Whilst no notice types in The Gazette are formally termed "first" or "second" notices, in order to answer this question "first" notices have been defined as relating to a resolution for winding up, or, in the case of court-led insolvencies, petitions to wind up companies or partnerships; and "second" notices have been defined as relating to the appointment of a liquidator.

This data includes all relevant notices which have been placed in relation to a company with either a registered address or principal trading address within the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council area, noting that an individual notice can refer to more than one company. The total number of notices for the period specified was 1119.

FINANCIAL YEAR	"FIRST NOTICES"	"SECOND NOTICES"	TOTAL
2015-16	84	110	194
2016-17	138	167	305
2017-18	109	187	296
2018-19	118	206	324
TOTAL	449	670	1119

■ Company Liquidations: West Yorkshire

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[8773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 3199 on Company Liquidations: West Yorkshire, how many business operating in West Yorkshire published a first or second notices in the London Gazette in each financial year between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The National Archives has reviewed notices placed in The London Gazette in each financial year between 2015-16 and 2018-19 in order to answer this question.

Whilst no notice types in The Gazette are formally termed "first" or "second" notices, in order to answer this question "first" notices have been defined as relating to a resolution for winding up, or, in the case of court-led insolvencies, petitions to wind up companies or partnerships; and "second" notices have been defined as relating to the appointment of a liquidator.

In order to fully cover West Yorkshire, this data includes all relevant notices which have been placed in relation to a company with either a registered address or principal trading address within the following local authority areas: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Leeds County Council, Kirklees Council, Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, noting that an individual notice can refer to more than one company. The total number of notices for the period specified was 9914.

FINANCIAL YEAR	"FIRST NOTICES"	"SECOND NOTICES"	TOTAL
2015-16	1069	1260	2329
2016-17	1192	1358	2550
2017-18	1024	1290	2314
2018-19	1315	1406	2721

FINANCIAL YEAR	"FIRST NOTICES"	"SECOND NOTICES"	TOTAL
TOTAL	4600	5314	9914

■ Cycling

Drew Hendry: [\[8653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with relevant stakeholders on extending the range of professional cycling disciplines that can qualify for managed isolation exemption letters from British Cycling to include downhill mountain biking.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 and the elite sport stage 4 guidance on return to cross-border competition sets the framework for elite sports exemptions to self-isolation.

It is for the National Governing Body to determine which disciplines or athletes meet the definitions within the legislation, and to issue the written evidence required to benefit from the exemption.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[6377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Events Research Programme accurately assesses the risk of live events with crowds taking place in summer 2021 as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

Public safety is our main priority and decisions on the Events Research Programme (ERP) are guided by a Science Board of experts—including senior Public Health England (PHE) representation—who take into account the latest public health data. All ERP pilot events are designed in a scientifically controlled way, and carefully consider ways to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

The ERP has been developed within a SAGE research framework, in line with the latest PHE and DHSC guidance, including on consent and ethical approval.

The evidence from these pilot events is being used to inform and shape Government policy to bring about the phased return of fuller audiences to venues and events across England.

Owen Thompson: [\[7878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to make available backdated support to supply chain businesses for the live events sector

that have (a) remained formally open during the outbreak of covid-19 and (b) been affected by the cancellation of live events.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Government recognises that the events industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by COVID-19. We continue to meet with stakeholders, including through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Tourism Industry Council, to discuss the specific issues facing the industry.

The £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund has benefited the sector by providing support to venues and many other cultural organisations, allowing them to stay open and continue operating where COVID restrictions permit. Over £1.2 billion has now been allocated to over 5000 arts and culture organisations across the country. Examples of production service companies that have received CRF funds so far include Adlib Audio Limited (Knowsley), GLS Light and Sound Production Ltd (Southampton) and Lights Control Rigging Productions Ltd (Blackburn).

The Culture Recovery Fund as a whole also included £188 million for the devolved administrations via the Barnett formula, with Scotland receiving £97 million. We know that Scotland are also deeply committed to their arts, culture, and heritage sectors and have provided a range of support funding, building on and including the CRF allocation.

The furlough and loan schemes are part of the government's wider plan to support, create and protect jobs through its Plan for Jobs. This includes the Kickstart Scheme, more investment in training and skills as well as the Self Employment Income Support Scheme grant, with a fourth grant.

The Government keeps all support and policies under review, and is in close contact with the production services industry to understand what support it needs.

■ **Football Governance Fan-led Review**

Julie Elliott:

[1060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what deadline he has placed for the report on the fan-led review of football governance commissioned by his Department.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has been working at pace on the review, including appointing the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford as Chair and publishing the Terms of Reference.

The first meeting of the advisory panel has been held, and we have announced that we expect an interim report from the review before the summer and a full report in the autumn.

■ Football: Asia

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[8716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to increase participation and representation of people from Asian backgrounds in football (a) nationally and (b) within their local communities.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in sport and physical activity, including football. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase levels of physical activity amongst under-represented groups, working closely with our arm's length and national bodies to achieve this. We are in regular dialogue with the football authorities across a range of matters, including increasing diversity.

We support the efforts of The FA in their work with Asian communities, as the largest ethnic minority group in the country, through the FA Asian Inclusion Plan. The plan focuses on tackling Asian underrepresentation at all levels of the game, both locally and nationally. The five pillars of the strategy work to ensure that intersectional participation, and representation, is occurring from grassroots all the way through to elite pathways and governance. Further details about the plan can be found here:

<https://www.thefa.com/news/2021/may/06/fa-asian-inclusion-strategy-update-20210506>

We also welcomed the launch of The FA's 'Football Leadership Diversity Code' last year, which is a step in the right direction to ensure English football better represents our modern and diverse society, on and off the pitch. The FA has committed to following this with a version adapted for the National League System and grassroots clubs this year.

Opportunities for participation are crucial too. The Government invests £18m a year into football facilities, through the Football Foundation, to improve access to quality facilities across the country with an additional £25m announced at Budget for this year as well. Inclusivity forms a part of the assessment criteria for any application for funding from the Foundation, with it being a core value of the organisation.

However, there is still progress to be made and the Government will continue to liaise closely with the football authorities on their efforts to improve diversity in the sport.

■ Gambling: Advertising

Ronnie Cowan:

[7862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2347 on Gambling: Advertising, whether the Government has an evidential basis for the absence of a causal link between (a) exposure to gambling advertising and (b) the development of problem gambling.

Ronnie Cowan:**[7863]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of increases in (a) gambling advertising on levels of gambling and (b) gambling on levels of gambling-related harm.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government launched the Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. As part of that we called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing gambling operators to advertise and will consider carefully any evidence of links between advertising and gambling related harm. The call for evidence closed on 31 March and received approximately 16,000 submissions from a broad range of interested organisations and individuals. We are currently considering the evidence submitted and aim to publish conclusions by the end of the year.

Professor Per Binde's 2014 literature review, conducted for the Responsible Gambling Trust (now GambleAware), explored five possible mechanisms by which gambling advertising could impact problem gambling behaviour:

1. Stimulating a current gambler's gambling behaviour to an extent that it becomes problematic;
2. Inducing a non-gambler to start gambling in a way that quickly becomes problematic;
3. Inducing a non-gambler to start gambling in a way that eventually becomes problematic;
4. Maintaining or exacerbating existing problem gambling behaviour; or
5. Creating a positive societal attitude (particularly amongst young people) towards gambling.

Of these potential impacts, Binde's review found empirical evidence only for the fourth. While this research found evidence that advertising may adversely impact problem gamblers' efforts to cut down, it did not establish a causal link between exposure to advertising and the development of problem gambling.

■ Listed Events: Gender**Julie Elliott:****[7173]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to update the list of Listed Sporting Events in respect of gender equality.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government recognises that more can be done to improve the diversity of the listed events regime and to support the broadcasting of disability and women's sport. This is why we have added the Paralympic Games to the list, recognising that it is an event of 'special national significance'.

We have also consulted on the addition of the women's equivalent of men's events already on the list. This consultation closed on 11 December 2019. Since then the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on sport, in particular women's sport and this work has been paused. We will set out our response and next steps in due course, when the situation with Covid-19 stabilises.

■ Loneliness: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[7198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of loneliness and social isolation in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle loneliness and social isolation caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Matt Warman:

DCMS collects data on levels of loneliness in England through its annual Community Life Survey. In addition, the Department commissioned a Community Life Survey Re-Contact Survey last year, to provide data on the period March-July 2020. These sources suggest that prevalence of loneliness has remained similar to pre-COVID levels, with 6% of adults reporting that they are always or often lonely. Community Life Survey data and reports are available online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey--2>

The Department does not collect robust data on loneliness in local areas. However, DCMS works closely with experts such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to monitor other data sources and build our understanding. ONS recently published the first estimates of loneliness at a local authority level. As the ONS report states, because of small sample sizes and large confidence intervals, local authorities should not be ranked against each other. The ONS report is available online at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/mappinglonelinessduringthecoronaviruspandemic/2021-04-07>

The Department is tackling loneliness caused by the COVID-19 pandemic through: providing funding for charities that bring people together; convening organisations across society to act together on loneliness; and public communications to get people talking about loneliness:

- In total since the start of the pandemic, over £34 million of the £750 million VCSE funding package has gone specifically towards reducing loneliness, with an additional £50 million going to organisations supporting people with their mental health.
- We have established a Tackling Loneliness Network, bringing together over 70 organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to share expertise and develop innovative ways to tackle loneliness.
- The 'Let's Talk Loneliness' campaign continues to share practical tips and signpost support. Our winter calendar, which ran throughout December, had over 12 million

impressions on social media, with a range of corporate and third sector partners promoting our messages on their channels.

Copies of the two annual progress reports on government's work on tackling loneliness are available in the Libraries of the House and online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-first-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-second-year>

■ Music: Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [7165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will review the current Gov.uk guidance, Working safely during coronavirus: 2.4 Non-professional performing arts, which restricts amateur choirs, orchestras and music groups to six people, to allow non-professional performing arts groups to meet in covid-secure venues, without a person limit, as in the autumn of 2020.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [7166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason his Department's guidance on amateur choirs, orchestras and music groups was updated on 18 May 2021, limiting rehearsals to six people, one day after step 3 of the Government's Roadmap suggested that non-professional performing arts groups could return to practice in any number.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Performing Arts guidance was updated on 18 May to reflect the latest arrangements for Step 3. I know that the restrictions on singing are frustrating to large numbers of amateur choirs and performance groups across the country and that many people have made sacrifices in order to drive down infections and protect the NHS over the last year. I can assure you that everyone across Government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

■ National Leisure Recovery Fund

Alison McGovern: [\[7817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2021 to Question 185358 on the National Leisure Recovery Fund, when the early information from the Government's data capture system will be published.

Nigel Huddleston:

The data capture system for the National Leisure Recovery Fund, Moving Communities, is now fully operational. The platform opened for data submissions at the start of April with 280 Local Authorities relating to c.1100 leisure facilities across England.

A series of headline national statistics will be released over the coming weeks with a fuller report available at the end of June. Local Authorities and the leisure service providers have been able to access their local data and interrogate through the filtering and dashboards available on the platform since the beginning of May.

■ National Lottery: Scratch Cards

Gary Sambrook: [\[8739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of National Lottery's decision to withdraw £10 online instant win games amid problem gambling concerns.

Gary Sambrook: [\[8740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of including (a) scratch cards and (b) instant win games in the National Lottery portfolio on (i) sales growth, (ii) returns to good causes and (iii) providing an entry point to problem gambling among players.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The decision by the operator to withdraw all £10 Interactive Instant Win Games in 2020, followed research, commissioned by the Gambling Commission, which found a correlation between players of Interactive Instant Win Games at the £10 price point and some problem gambling behaviours. The research did not show causation. The precautionary actions taken in this respect are indicative of the strong player protection policies in place on the National Lottery.

'Instants games' have been part of the National Lottery portfolio for a majority of the time since the National Lottery was launched in 1994. Scratchcards were introduced in 1995 and online Interactive Instant Win Games in 2003. A broad portfolio ensures the National Lottery continues to appeal to a wide range of people and can provide substantial contributions for good causes every week. This has helped the National Lottery contribute over £1.2 billion to the UK wide response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All games, including instants games, are licenced by the independent regulator, the Gambling Commission. In determining whether to licence games, the Commission

will consider the potential impact on players and the player protection mechanisms which are in place to protect players from harm.

Evidence from the latest (2018) [Health Survey](#) for England shows that National Lottery games were associated with the lowest rates of problem gambling of all gambling products considered. Problem gambling rates for National Lottery draw-based games were 0.9% while the figure for Scratchcards was 1.4%.

■ **National Lottery: Standards**

Gary Sambrook: **[8741]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the National Lottery operates with the highest regard for player protection both on and offline.

Mr John Whittingdale:

I refer my hon. friend to the answer given on 24th May, in response to question [4020](#).

■ **Ofcom: Public Appointments**

Christian Matheson: **[8639]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many applications were received in the initial competition for the post of Chair of Ofcom; and how many candidates were interviewed for that position.

Mr John Whittingdale:

A total of eleven candidates applied and subsequently four were interviewed. This process was conducted in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments and has been regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Christian Matheson: **[8640]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations his Department received on the process for the appointment of the Chair of Ofcom, excluding candidate applications and expressions of interest.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The recent process to appoint the permanent Chair of Ofcom was conducted in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments and has been regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. In line with the governance code, the Minister is advised during this process by an advisory assessment panel who are required to make an independent and objective assessment as to whether candidates meet the published criteria. The panel included a Senior Independent Panel Member, two further members who are independent of the department and Ofcom and a senior department official.

■ Social Media: Females

Chi Onwurah:

[8604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential for the instream payment functionality of (a) OnlyFans and (b) other similar subscription social platforms incentivising young women into taking riskier behaviour online.

Caroline Dinenage:

OnlyFans have failed to properly protect children and this is completely unacceptable. Our new laws will make sure this no longer happens. The Online Safety Bill will deliver the most comprehensive approach in the world to protecting children online. The draft Online Safety Bill, published on May 12, will ensure companies design their platforms to be safer for users.

The strongest protections in the legislation are for children and young people. Unless services in scope are able to prove that children are not accessing their service, they will need to conduct a child safety risk assessment and provide safety measures for child users, keeping these under regular review. Companies will have to assess the risk of children encountering harm from illegal content, priority harmful content for children, which will be set out in secondary legislation, as well as any other content they may identify which could cause harm to children. Companies will also need to assess how the design and operation of the service, for example instream payments and live-streaming, may increase or reduce the risks identified.

Furthermore, the UK's regulatory regime for video sharing platforms (VSPs), which was implemented from November 1st 2020, requires all UK-established VSPs to take appropriate measures to protect under-18s from harmful content. Ofcom are actively working with UK-established VSPs to help them understand their duties under this regime. Ofcom are able to take enforcement action against VSPs that have failed to fulfil these duties.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Gavin Newlands:

[8641]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the comparability factors to be applied to the summer phase of the UK Government's Sport Recovery Package.

Nigel Huddleston:

For the summer phase of the Sport Survival Package, as with all government interventions, the Green Book guidance was applied. The Green Book is issued by HM Treasury, providing guidance on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects. The Treasury's five case model is the means of developing proposals in a holistic way that optimises the social / public value produced by the use of public resources. Therefore, the Sport Survival Package has been assessed using a cost benefit analysis, ensuring value for money.

■ Television Licences: Autism and Dementia

Thangam Debonnaire:

[\[7853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the BBC on the effect of TV Licensing enforcement activities on people with (a) dementia and (b) autism; and if he will publish the minutes of those meetings.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government meets regularly with the BBC to discuss a wide range of topics.

However, the BBC Board and TV Licensing are responsible for the enforcement and collection of the TV licence as set out in the Charter.

In relation to the BBC's changes to the over 75 concession, the BBC has provided assurances that it will deliver the most sensitive possible handling for those who may be affected, including elderly people with complex illnesses like dementia.

EDUCATION

■ Arts: Higher Education

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[8557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will (a) review and (b) consult on the adequacy of funding available for music and arts courses at higher education level.

Michelle Donelan:

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

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

One of our proposals is for a 50% reduction in the rate of high-cost subject funding, which is one element of the wider Strategic Priorities Grant, for some subjects in order to enable this reprioritisation.

It is important to note that the Strategic Priorities Grant accounts for a relatively small proportion of the total income of higher education providers today. For the providers losing funding due to this reallocation, the income lost would account for approximately 0.05% of their estimated total income, based on the latest data available.

This important reprioritisation of taxpayers' money does not mean this government is devaluing the arts or social sciences. High-quality provision in a range of subjects is critical for our workforce, and our public services, and is culturally enriching for our society.

That is why, as part of the same reform programme, we have asked the OfS to invest an additional £10 million in our world-leading specialist providers, many of which specialise in arts provision. We want to ensure that our specialist providers receive additional support, and that grant funding is used to effectively support students.

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

■ Assessments

Peter Kyle:

[8679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to prevent the teacher-assessed grading process in the 2020-21 academic year leading to legal disputes.

Nick Gibb:

Parents and pupils can have confidence in the grades awarded this summer. Teachers are being supported to assess their students, including through clear guidance published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>. The JCQ guidance provides detailed information to schools and colleges on the grading process and the range of support that Awarding Organisations have and will continue to provide. The Department trusts teachers' judgements as they are best placed to understand the content students have covered, their students' performance and how they compare to other students this year and in previous years. Teacher assessed grades will allow results to reflect the knowledge students have acquired based on what they have been taught, recognising the variability in teaching that some young people have experienced.

To further support teachers, a robust quality assurance process is in place. There will be a process for both internal and external quality assurance to support teachers to do what is needed, ensure as much consistency as possible and reduce the risk of any malpractice. Head teachers will have to confirm to the exam boards that the requirements for quality assurance have been met at the time of submitting the grades for their centre.

Students should feel confident in their teacher assessed grades, but an appeals system will be in place as a safety net in exceptional circumstances, for example, where an error has been made and not identified in the earlier parts of the process.

■ Children: Poverty

Thangam Debbonaire:

[7851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what research his Department has carried out or commissioned on the effect of hunger and poverty on children's ability to learn effectively.

Vicky Ford:

The government supports the provision of nutritious food in schools, which ensures that pupils are well nourished, develop healthy eating habits and can concentrate and learn. Under the benefits-related criteria, there are currently 1.6 million pupils eligible for and claiming a free school meal, and a further 1.4 million infant-aged children who benefit from our Universal Infant Free School Meals policy.

The government also funds breakfast clubs in over 2,450 schools to support more than a quarter of a million children in the most disadvantaged areas of the country. Up to £24 million will be available to extend our support for school breakfast clubs until 2023, to make sure that thousands of children in disadvantaged areas have a healthy start to the day. We know that breakfast clubs can bring a wide range of benefits for children. An evaluation by the Education Endowment Foundation found that supporting schools to run a free-of-charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered an average of 2 months' additional progress for pupils in key stage 1 with moderate to low security. Breakfast club schools also saw an improvement in pupil behaviour and attendance.

Backed by an investment of up to £220 million, the Holiday Activities and Food programme ran nationwide throughout the Easter holiday period and will run during the summer and Christmas holidays in 2021, supporting disadvantaged pupils with enriching activities, providing them with healthy food, helping them to learn new things and improving socialisation. This programme builds on pilots of the scheme since 2018, including last summer's programme, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities. We have developed this programme, as we know that disadvantaged children are more likely to experience unhealthy holidays (in terms of nutrition and physical exercise), are less likely to take part in enriching activities and can experience isolation during the holidays.

■ Department of Education: Correspondence**Afzal Khan:**[\[6454\]](#)

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

Nick Gibb:

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 right hon. Members from Government Departments and Agencies. This data will be released, and made available to Members, in due course.

■ Outdoor Education: Closures**Rachael Maskell:** [\[7213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many local authority-owned outdoor education centres have closed since March 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education does not monitor, collect, or hold any information on outdoor education centres.

■ Primary Education: Sports**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[7126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to announce the PE and sport premium funding for 2021-22.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[7151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the PE and sport premium for 2021-22 academic year are planned to be announced.

Caroline Nokes: [\[7159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, by what date the PE and sport premiums for schools for 2021-22 academic year are planned to be announced.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is aware of the importance of giving schools as much notice as possible of future funding. We will confirm arrangements for the Primary physical education and sport premium for the 2021/22 academic year as soon as possible.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[7127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of making an announcement on PE and sport premium funding with a short period remaining before the start of the 2021-22 school year on (a) the efficacy of programmes for pupil health and wellbeing, (b) additional costs for participant schools and (c) staff job security.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is aware of the importance of giving schools as much notice as possible of future funding. We will confirm arrangements for the Primary physical education and sport premium for the 2021/22 academic year as soon as possible.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[7128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he plans to provide funding through the 2021-22 PE and sport premium for additional work with schools in 2021-22 to improve levels of pupil physical activity following the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The physical education (PE) and sport premium can be used by primary schools to develop or add to their PE, sport, and physical activity provision, and to build capacity

and capability within the school. This includes providing additional opportunities for pupils to be physically active to help with recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department has ensured that schools have flexibility to use PE and sport premium from last year where their ability to make provision was limited by the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department is currently considering arrangements for the Primary PE and sport premium for the 2021/22 academic year and will confirm the position as soon as possible.

Caroline Nokes:

[7161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what metrics he has used to determine the effectiveness of school sports premiums.

Nick Gibb:

The Primary PE and Sport Premium survey, published in July 2019, assessed the impact of the doubling of the PE and Sport Premium to £320 million from September 2017.

The findings indicated that a large majority of schools identified that, following the doubling of the premium, there had been increases in the profile of PE and sport in supporting whole school improvement, the confidence, knowledge and/or skills of all staff in teaching PE, the level of competitive sport being offered, and the range of PE and sport being offered.

The detailed findings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-pe-and-sport-premium-survey>.

In addition, local Active Partnerships conduct an annual review of a large sample of schools' uses of their PE and Sport Premium including impact, and report the results of this review to the Department.

■ Schools: Protective Clothing

Rachael Maskell:

[7224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the latest evidence on the effect of mask wearing in school communal spaces on covid-19 transmission.

Nick Gibb:

From 17 May, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings are no longer recommended for pupils in classrooms or communal areas in schools. Face coverings are also no longer recommended for staff in classrooms. This is supported by Public Health England (PHE).

In all schools the Department continues to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible.

When the policy was introduced, it was an appropriate additional safety measure while rates of infection were high in the community. Since then, the epidemiological position improved, and vaccine rates have increased, shifting the balance of risks. As the four tests for easing restrictions in Step 3 of the roadmap were met, it was an

appropriate time to remove the recommendation for pupils to wear face masks and staff in communal areas.

Our policy on face coverings and the system of controls is kept under review and is informed by the latest scientific and medical advice from PHE. Further information on the use and effectiveness of face coverings can be found at: <https://phe.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-retrieve-file.pl?id=9adedb17d5622f9cd7e42febcbadb19ad> and https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf.

■ Schools: Religion

Sarah Olney:

[7894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to take steps in response to the recommendations of the National Secular Society's report entitled *Religiosity inspections: the case against faith-based reviews of state schools*, including repeal of section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Nick Gibb:

Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 places a duty on the governing body of maintained schools that are designated as having a religious character, to arrange for the inspection of any denominational education and collective worship. This requirement applies to maintained faith schools and academies (via the funding agreement). In arranging the inspection, the school must consult with the appropriate religious body, specified in regulations. This approach brings a consistency of approach and oversight to the inspections.

The Government greatly values the contribution that faith schools make to the education sector by providing high quality school places and choice for parents. Section 48 inspections provide assurance in relation to the religious education and collective worship provided in these schools. There are no plans to change the current arrangements for the inspection of designated faith schools.

■ Schools: Sexual Offences

Peter Kyle:

[8681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Ofsted review on sexual abuse in schools will be published.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member for Hove, and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Schools: York

Rachael Maskell:

[8676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional mental health and wellbeing support his Department has provided to (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in York; and whether he has made an assessment of the (i) adequacy of that support and (ii) need for further support to be provided to those schools.

Vicky Ford:

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is a priority for this government.

We have supported schools to put the right pastoral support in place through the Wellbeing for Education Return scheme in 2020/21 academic year, which funded expert advisers in every English local authority, including City of York to offer training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year – including trauma, anxiety, or grief. Our Mental Health in Education Action Group highlighted that schools and colleges continue to need help to understand, navigate and access the range of provision available locally, so we provided an additional £7 million funding to local authorities to provide further expert support to do this through the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme.

The support schools are providing to their pupils following the return to face-to-face education should include time devoted to supporting mental health and wellbeing, which will play a fundamental part in supporting recovery. We want schools to have the freedom to decide what wider pastoral and extra-curricular activity to put in place, based on the needs of their pupils and drawing on evidence of effective practice. The return to education settings was supported by a £700 million package, which includes a new one-off Recovery Premium for state primary, secondary and special schools to use as they see best to support disadvantaged students. This will help schools to provide their disadvantaged pupils with a one-off boost to the support, both academic and pastoral, that has been proved most effective in helping them recover from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and can be used for mental health and wellbeing support.

On 5 March 2021 the government confirmed an additional £79 million in funding to NHS England for children and young people's mental health support, which will include increasing the number of Mental Health Support Teams, which include the areas of Scarborough, Ryedale and Vale of York. The number of support teams will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. This increase, on top of the investment in mental health services set out in the NHS 10-year plan, means that millions of children and young people will have access to significantly expanded mental health services.

Alongside this, we confirmed on 10 May 2021 that up to 7,800 schools and colleges in England will be offered funding worth £9.5 million to train a senior mental health lead from their staff in the next academic year, which is part of the government's

commitment to offering this training to all state schools and colleges by 2025. Training will provide senior leads with the knowledge and skills to develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting, which encourages staff to develop their own understanding of issues affecting their pupils, giving young people a voice in how their school or college addresses wellbeing and working with parents and monitoring pupils where appropriate. Further information can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958151/Promoting_children_and_young_people_s_emotional_health_and_wellbeing_a_whole_school_and_college_approach.pdf. We will also fund an

adapted 'Link' programme, which is designed to improve partnerships between health and education leaders in local areas, raise awareness of mental health concerns and improve referrals to specialist help when needed.

■ **Students: Loans**

Stephen Morgan:

[8728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the Resource Account and Budgeting charge his Department estimates to be made up of the interest accrued on student loans rather than the capital borrowed for tuition and maintenance.

Michelle Donelan:

In the 2020-21 financial year, the Resource Accounting and Budget (RAB) charge for full-time Plan 2 loans was estimated to be 54%

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loan-forecasts-england-2019-to-2020>). This is calculated by forecasting how far future repayments on those loans will fall short of the amount originally lent, when put into present value terms using the HM Treasury discount rate (currently RPI + 0.7%).

The interest charged on student loans adds to the total amount of repayments received. For 2020-21 loans issued, the department estimates that repayments due to interest reduced the RAB charge by 4 percentage points.

■ **Universities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[7870]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, in the context of the ability of students living in private accommodation to travel to their term time address at any time, for what reason he has suggested to universities that the start of the 2021-22 academic year should be staggered.

Michelle Donelan:

As autonomous institutions it is for universities to determine their own provision, including arrangements for the start of term, taking account of any government guidance.

The government will announce further easing of COVID-19 restrictions at Step 4 of the roadmap, including the outcome of the review of social distancing measures,

which will be no earlier than 21 June. In light of these developments, we are working with universities to identify a number of scenarios we should consider in planning for the autumn term, taking account of the latest public health advice. We intend to update the higher education guidance in due course to support the return of students for the new academic year.

As outlined in guidance, we expect providers to continue to organise the return of students in a way that minimises the logistical risks of large numbers of students travelling between households at the same time. We encourage providers to work with other local providers to manage the return of students in a way that minimises transport pressures. Providers should apply what they have learned over the course of this academic year to minimise the risk of outbreaks at the start of the new term.

■ Universities: Foundation Courses

Dan Jarvis: [\[7183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of universities that offer foundation year provision.

Dan Jarvis: [\[7184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of supporting more universities to offer foundation year courses on the Government's levelling up agenda.

Michelle Donelan:

We recognise that foundation years can play an important role in enabling students with lower prior attainment, potentially from disadvantaged backgrounds, to access high tariff provision. We also recognise their role in allowing students to switch subjects. Some universities are already using high-quality foundation years in ways which provide good value for these students, and we are pleased to support such universities.

We are committed to ensuring that all foundation years continue to provide good value for money and provide a distinct benefit to students.

We plan to consult on further reforms to the higher education system, including the treatment of foundation years, in summer 2021, before setting out a full response to the report and final conclusion to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding alongside the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

■ Universities: Racial Discrimination

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[7724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to take steps in response to the reported planned introduction by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University of arrangements (a) defining racism as an exclusively white phenomenon, (b) encouraging the anonymous reporting of perceived microaggressions by named individuals and (c)

other related measures; and what steps the Government plans to take through forthcoming legislative proposals to tackle such arrangements in UK universities.

Michelle Donelan:

I understand that the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge has issued a statement setting out that the website referred to has been temporarily taken down while some material is removed, and I welcome this decision.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animals: Antibiotics**

Luke Pollard:

[\[7936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to ban (a) the routine use of antibiotics and (b) all preventative use of antibiotics in groups of animals from January 2022 in line with Regulation (EU) 2019/6 and Regulation (EU) 2019/4.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK Government and Devolved Administrations are committed to reducing unnecessary use of antibiotics in animals, and this includes routine preventative use.

The UK played a significant role during the negotiations on EU Regulations 2019/4 (medicated feed) and 2019/6 (veterinary medicinal products) and many changes in the EU law on veterinary medicines and medicated feed are desirable from a UK policy perspective. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate is currently in the process of amending and supplementing the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 as they have an effect in Great Britain. This involves consideration of provisions corresponding or similar to those in the EU regulations referred to, as proscribed in the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021.

Any changes to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 will be subject to formal public consultation to allow stakeholders to give their views on the proposed changes.

■ **Environment Agency: Finance**

Luke Pollard:

[\[R\]](#) [\[1390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of reductions in funding allocated to the Environment Agency in the financial year 2021-22 on its ability to undertake enforcement work.

Rebecca Pow:

For enforcement, monitoring and incident response, the Environment Agency (EA) receives the majority of its funding via Grant in Aid from the Government.

The funding directly allocated for enforcement has not reduced for the year 2021/22.

The EA will always seek to deliver the best outcomes for people and the environment and prioritise its enforcement work in line with the funding available, focusing on the cases that pose the greatest threat, risk and harm to the environment and communities.

■ Flood Control

Bill Esterson:

[\[7799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2021 to Question 4583 on Flood control, if he will publish the content of that feedback.

Rebecca Pow:

All organisations who submitted expressions of interest to the flood and coastal resilience innovation programme have been offered detailed feedback. The significant details included in the expressions of interest and the subsequent feedback are commercially confidential, meaning that it is only appropriate for this to be handled between the applicant organisations and the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency is continuing to work with all projects that did not secure funding via this programme to take their good ideas forward.

■ Plastics: Pollution

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[8552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of plastic pollution in waterways in Newcastle.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency has not conducted an assessment on the level of plastic pollution in waterways in Newcastle.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[8553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the level of plastic pollution in Newcastle.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. We are making great strides to tackle plastic pollution across the country, including in Newcastle. In December 2018 we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy and keep resources in the system for as long as possible. In October 2020, we introduced measures to restrict the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds. The single-use carrier bag charge, which has led to a 95% reduction in the use of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarkets, has been increased to 10p and extended to all retailers to further encourage customers to bring their own bags to carry shopping and reduce the volumes of single-use plastic being used.

Our Environment Bill will enable us to significantly change the way that we manage our waste and take forward a number of the proposals from the Resources and Waste Strategy. The Bill will include powers to create Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes; introduce Deposit Return Schemes (DRS); establish greater consistency in the recycling system; better control the export of plastic waste; and give us the power to set new charges for other single-use plastic items. Our consultations on an EPR scheme for packaging and a DRS for drinks containers closed on 4 June and our consultation on our proposals for consistency in the recycling system in England is open for responses until 4 July. More details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/environment/waste-and-recycling>

Local councils, such as Newcastle City Council, are responsible for keeping their public land clear of litter and refuse. For any local litter issue, we recommend contacting the council to make sure it is aware of the problem. It is up to councils to decide how best to meet their statutory duty to keep their relevant land clear of litter and refuse.

The Government has put together a package of over £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. £38 million has been set aside through the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund and the Resource Action Fund including £10 million specifically to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter. The Government has also announced £60 million of funding through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150 million investment from industry, towards the development of smart, sustainable plastic packaging, which will aim to make the UK a world leader in sustainable packaging for consumer products.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus

Stephen Doughty:

[8612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of UK Overseas Territory residents have received a (a) first dose and (b) both doses of a covid-19 vaccine, by territory.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government has committed to supply COVID-19 vaccines for the people of the Overseas Territories. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) have been arranging deliveries and vaccines have now been delivered to all 12 permanently inhabited Territories, most recently the Pitcairn Islands and Tristan da Cunha, but also to South Georgia. Further deliveries are anticipated to complete the programmes over the coming weeks. The table below represents the percentage of the adult population in each to receive first and second doses of the vaccines.

OVERSEAS TERRITORY	1ST DOSES AS A % OF ADULT POPULATION (AS OF 3 JUNE)	2ND DOSES AS A % OF ADULT POPULATION
Anguilla	83%	51%
Ascension	98%	90%
Bermuda	71%	64%
BVI	47%	22%
Cayman Islands	82%	70%
Falklands	95%	93%
Gibraltar*	>90%	>90%
Montserrat	39%	34%
Pitcairn	82%	0%
St Helena	98%	92%
South Georgia	100%	0%
TCI	64%	50%
Tristan da Cunha	90%	0%

■ Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Stephen Doughty:

[8610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the rescheduled Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Rwanda will take place; and what plans there are for virtual meetings to take place in the interim.

Nigel Adams:

It is for Rwanda (as Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) host), with the Commonwealth Secretariat, to propose a new date for Member states' agreement, taking into account the international calendar and pandemic-related developments. The UK looks forward to a new date being fixed for the next CHOGM as soon as practicable. The timing and arrangements for planned Commonwealth Ministerial meetings, including the annual meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers, will be communicated when they have been fixed.

The UK will remain as Chair-in-Office until CHOGM is held, and will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat, Rwanda and the other member states to take forward Commonwealth business.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Overseas Aid**Layla Moran:**[\[7262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the value of Official Development Assistance funding spent in (a) the Democratic Republic of Congo and (b) Goma in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

The UK is a longstanding donor to the DRC. Since 2013 the UK has spent over £1.1 billion GBP in bilateral ODA in the DRC. Over the last 5 years this is broken down as follows: 2016/17 - £129.5 million, 2017/18 - £166.2 million, 2018/19 - £203.7 million, 2019/20 - £184.6 million, 2020/21 - £132.4 million.

Through this funding, UK aid is:

- improving health services for up to 10 million people
- helping 4.7 million children under 5, women and adolescent girls to have better nutrition
- 4.6 million people will get sustainable access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services
- helping 400,000 children get a decent education
- increased the income of over 800 thousand people, including 240,000 women.

Whilst we do not have disaggregated figures by province, a large part of our focus has been in the East, including in North and South Kivu.

Layla Moran:[\[7263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which charities operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo have received Official Development Assistance funding in each of the last five years; and what estimate he has made of the value of that funding.

James Duddridge:

The UK is a longstanding donor to the DRC. Since 2013 the UK has spent over £1.1 billion GBP in bilateral ODA in the DRC. Over the last 5 years this is broken down as follows: 2016/17 - £129.5 million, 2017/18 - £166.2 million, 2018/19 - £203.7 million, 2019/20 - £184.6 million, 2020/21 - £132.4 million.

The UK delivers through a range of partners including UN, private sector and NGOs. Over the last 5 years the largest charity recipients have been:

IMA World Health

Mercy Corps Europe

Action Against Hunger UK

Concern Worldwide

Through UK funding to IMA, we have supported 2.8 million deliveries attended by a skilled birth attendant, and ensured 2.3 million children under the age of one are fully vaccinated. UK funding to humanitarian partners has provided 1.97 million people with food aid, cash and vouchers to reduce food insecurity and treated over 300,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Volcanoes

Layla Moran:

[\[7264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of reductions to Official Development Assistance spending on the ability of the UK Government to respond effectively to the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

James Duddridge:

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid to 0.5% of GNI. Despite the reductions in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), the UK will remain one of the largest humanitarian donors in DRC and a world-leading ODA donor. We will spend more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty and respond to humanitarian crises across the globe.

In response to the recent eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, UK-funded partners are already on the ground providing emergency support. The International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund is providing first aid, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and psychological support and working to restore family units. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), one of our major humanitarian partners, is providing support for unaccompanied children and the UN Humanitarian Air Service is providing vital reconnaissance flights in the area. We are working closely with the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and our humanitarian partners to monitor the situation, assess the impact, and deliver further assistance if required.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[7825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what humanitarian and other assistance he is providing to people affected by the recent volcanic eruption in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

James Duddridge:

The UK is one of the largest humanitarian donors in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In response to the recent eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, UK-funded partners are already on the ground providing emergency support. The International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund is providing first aid, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and psychological support and working to restore family units. The International Committee of the Red Cross is providing support for unaccompanied children and the UN Humanitarian Air Service is providing vital reconnaissance flights in the area. We are working closely with the UN peacekeeping

mission (MONUSCO), the UN Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs and our humanitarian partners to monitor the situation, assess the impact, and deliver further assistance if required.

■ Eritrea: Ethiopia

Stephen Doughty:

[\[8613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the presence of Eritrean regular or irregular forces in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We continue to closely monitor the situation and are clear that the withdrawal of Eritrean forces must be swift, unconditional and verifiable. However, despite Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy's commitment that Eritrean troops would withdraw from Tigray we are yet to see any evidence that this is happening. There are numerous shocking reports of atrocities committed by Eritrean forces in Tigray, and their continued presence is fuelling insecurity. These forces must leave Ethiopia immediately. We continue to press hard for this commitment to be delivered. I made this clear on my call to the Eritrean Ambassador on 16 March.

■ Ethiopia: Overseas Aid

Stephen Doughty:

[\[7827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish the amount of Official Development Assistance provided for (a) security sector reform, (b) justice sector reform, (c) strengthening human rights and (d) support to refugees and internally displaced people, either directly or indirectly to the Government of Ethiopia in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

The former Department for International Development spent £1.489 billion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Ethiopia in the financial years from 2016/17 to 2020/21. This budget covers those categories (with the exception of Security Sector Reform, where no ODA funds were used). The FCDO publishes all ODA spending, including in Tigray, on devtracker.

The FCDO made the decision in November 2020 to pause financial aid payments to the Government of Ethiopia destined for Tigray. However £22 million has been allocated to the humanitarian response in Tigray to support those in need, working through other implementing partners. UK-funded partners such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are providing food, shelter, water and healthcare in challenging circumstances. The FCDO is in the process of allocating budgets for programmes this financial year. Both the Tigray conflict and the nature of UK support will be kept under close review.

■ Guatemala: Non-governmental Organisations

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[7765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) civil society and (b) human rights of the proposed adoption of legislation on Non-Governmental Organisations in Guatemala; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is concerned by the adoption of legislation targeting Non-Governmental Organisations in Guatemala. The law threatens Guatemala's democratic space by targeting NGOs, foundations, and associations that work on human rights, the rule of law, anti-corruption and transparency efforts. The British Embassy in Guatemala City has met with civil society groups to listen to their concerns, and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

■ Haiti: Coronavirus

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[7101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance the Government is providing to Haiti to tackle the recent surge in cases of covid-19 in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response to COVID-19. We have committed up to £1.3 billion of aid spending to counter the impact of the pandemic. The UK Government is one of the leading donors to COVAX, committing £548m to the scheme, which will contribute to the supply of at least 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 for up to 92 developing countries. The UK is pleased that the Government of Haiti has recently announced that the AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID-19 vaccine is now authorised for use. GAVI has since confirmed the availability of an initial 130,000 doses which should be delivered before the end of July.

■ Haiti: Politics and Government

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[7102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Haitian counterpart on the proposed changes to that country's constitution and upcoming referendum.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is closely following developments in Haiti including the upcoming constitutional referendum. We have regular Ministerial and official engagement with both the Haitian Ambassador to the UK, H.E. Euvrard Saint Amand, and relevant Haitian Ministers on these issues. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Caribbean, last spoke to the Haitian Ambassador to the UK on 28 May 2021 about a range of issues including the upcoming constitutional referendum. The

UK also supports the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN Special Political Mission, BINUH, in their diplomatic engagement with the Haitian authorities on both the proposed constitutional referendum and elections.

■ Mali: Politics and Government

Stephen Doughty:

[\[7187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) political and (b) security situation in Mali; and whether he has plans to (a) reduce or (b) maintain ODA spending in that country in 2021-22.

James Duddridge:

I condemned the recent detention of the President, Prime Minister and other members of the government in Mali. Any attempt to impose a change of leadership by force, including through forced resignations, is unacceptable.

We are monitoring the political and security situation in Mali closely. We are ready to support ECOWAS efforts to monitor progress towards democratic, constitutional rule within the agreed timeframe, and with full respect for the conditions set out by ECOWAS.

The UK remains committed to supporting stability and development in Mali, and will continue to provide aid to those most in need. The final figures for UK spending in the Sahel will be published in due course, but we will remain a significant donor to the region.

■ Nepal: Humanitarian Aid

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[7832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to respond to the humanitarian situation in Nepal; what assessment he has made of the speed of the Government's response to that situation, with particular reference to the Government's acknowledgment that Nepal is considered a close ally of the UK with historic ties of over 200 years; and what comparative assessment he has made of the speed of the Government's response and the response of other countries to that situation.

Nigel Adams:

On Friday 28 May, a plane carrying the UK's donation of 260 ventilators and 2,000 visors arrived in Nepal, in response to an urgent request for medical supplies from the Government of Nepal. Moreover, since the beginning of the pandemic, British Embassy Kathmandu has helped Nepal respond to COVID-19 by reprioritising over £40 million of its aid budget. This support has included the construction of an oxygen plant in a Kathmandu hospital; technical advice to local government on managing the impact of COVID-19; water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to support around 300,000 people; safe spaces for women in isolation centres; cash and voucher assistance for the most vulnerable; and nutrition support for pregnant and lactating

women. The UK is also a leading donor to COVAX, having committed £548 million to the scheme. COVAX has allocated 2,000,000 vaccine doses to Nepal, of which 348,000 have already been delivered. We are working closely with international partners to support the people of Nepal at this difficult time.

■ Overseas Aid: Health Services

Layla Moran:

[\[7932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 5258, whether a specific impact assessment for the transmission of covid-19 in developing countries was conducted prior to the decision being taken to cancel Official Development Assistance funding to the UK Partnerships for Health Systems programme.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's aid budget has been allocated in accordance with our key strategic priorities, after a cross-government review of how we spend ODA. The Foreign Secretary has agreed he will focus our investment and expertise where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum impact. Officials considered any impact on women and girls, the most marginalised and vulnerable, people with disabilities and people from other protected groups, when developing advice to Ministers. While most future activity on the programme is being stopped, existing COVID Response Fund grants are being funded to completion and will support developing country partners to respond to the pandemic and maintain essential health services.

■ Religious Freedom

Stephen Doughty:

[\[7828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support he is providing to help tackle the persecution of non-religious people globally.

Nigel Adams:

Protecting freedom of religion or belief for all faiths, and none, remains a priority for the UK Government. Members of non-religious communities continue to be victims of harassment and persecution, despite progress over recent years with the promotion of freedom of religion or belief for all. The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the severity and scale of violations and abuses of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all in many parts of the world. As the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon underlined these points at the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group Annual General Meeting on 24 May.

Lord Ahmad works closely with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB, Fiona Bruce MP. In addition to championing FoRB, Mrs Bruce represents the UK at meetings of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance to advocate for the rights of individuals being discriminated against or persecuted on the basis of their faith or belief, including members of non-religious communities.

■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights**Ed Davey:** [\[7093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the International Truth and Justice Project's submission to the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime regarding Sri Lanka.

Ed Davey: [\[7094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the International Truth and Justice Project's submission to the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is grateful for the submission from the International Truth and Justice Project in relation to Sri Lanka. The UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime offers a powerful tool to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses. We will keep all evidence, including the submission from the International Truth and Justice Project, and potential listings under review. However, it is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designation.

■ Tigray: Human Rights**Stephen Doughty:** [\[7186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the US Administration on the use of targeted sanctions and restrictions for those accused of human rights abuses and atrocities against civilians in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned at human rights violations, and atrocities against civilians in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Since the conflict started, the UK, alongside international partners including the US, have consistently called for an end to fighting, and for all parties to the conflict to prioritise the protection of civilians.

The Foreign Secretary discussed concerns about the situation in Tigray with Secretary of State Blinken on 3 May. We continue to closely engage US counterparts on the full range of human rights issues in Washington DC, Addis Ababa and in capital to capital discussions, including with the US envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman. We will continue to work closely with the US on this issue.

■ Tigray: White Phosphorus**Stephen Doughty:** [\[7826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports in the Daily Telegraph on 24 May 2021 of the use of white

phosphorous on civilians in Tigray, what independent assessment he is undertaking in response to those reports.

James Duddridge:

We are aware of reports alleging that civilians in Tigray have suffered burns that may be consistent with the weaponised use of white phosphorus. The Government of Ethiopia has strongly refuted allegations that such weapons are being used against civilians. The UK strongly condemns direct or indiscriminate attacks against civilians no matter what weapon is used.

The UK Government is working to establish the facts. Access to the affected areas, and to verified information, remains difficult. We have called for communications to be restored and for unfettered humanitarian access. We have also consistently called for access for independent human rights investigators. We will continue to do so and support the efforts of the joint investigation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[8597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the return of disabled citizens from covid-19 red list countries.

Nigel Adams:

Our advice to British nationals abroad is that they should follow the public health advice of the country which they are in, including current COVID-19 restrictions, and consider whether they should take additional precautions due to underlying health conditions. Our consular staff endeavour to give appropriate and tailored support to British nationals overseas and their families in the UK, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. This support includes providing assistance to return to the UK where it is appropriate. The assistance the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) can provide to British nationals abroad is set out in the publication: Support for British nationals abroad: A Guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide>). British nationals who wish to return to the UK should check current COVID-19 related restrictions on gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>), noting that individuals returning from red listed countries must enter managed quarantine in a hotel. Any quarantine enquiries, including medical exemption requests, should be sent to DHSC directly at DHSCtesttrace.customerfeedbackteam@nhs.net.

■ **Xinjiang: Uyghurs**

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[\[7207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the viability of the route to court determination regarding alleged genocide and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the People's Republic of China against

Uyghurs and other predominantly Turkic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, if he will review his policy on genocide determination.

Nigel Adams:

The Government remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, and continues to monitor closely the significant volume of credible evidence suggesting that serious, systemic human rights violations are occurring in the region. On 22 March, we took the significant step of imposing asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese officials as well as a security body responsible for the egregious human rights violations. By acting with 30 other countries we increased the reach and impact of these measures and sent the clearest possible signal of the international community's serious concern and collective willingness to act. It remains the long-standing policy of the UK Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies. It should be decided after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible judicial process.

■ **Zimbabwe: Political Prisoners**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[7185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports on the detention and repression of opposition activists, civil society actors and journalists in Zimbabwe.

James Duddridge:

The UK has been clear that meaningful political and economic reform, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, are prerequisites for Zimbabwe's reengagement with the international community. We are therefore concerned by the unacceptable pattern of arrests of prominent opposition, civil society figures and journalists. I have regularly raised concerns about the treatment of political opponents. I wrote to the Zimbabwean Minister of Home Affairs on the case of Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova on 10 May 2021 urging for them to be treated in line with the constitution.

We continue to prioritise support for human rights, including political and media freedoms, in our programming, supporting civil society to monitor human rights violations and support survivors. The UK Government will continue to speak out, both privately and in public, where we have concerns and we will work alongside the international community to support a better future for all Zimbabweans.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:**[\[7822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people living with delirium; and whether an assessment has been made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the rate of diagnosis of that condition.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no such estimate or assessment.

■ **Accident and Emergency Departments: Admissions****Justin Madders:**[\[296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have attended accident and emergency in each month since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

The numbers of Accident and Emergency attendances in England for each month from March 2020 are in the table below.

	ALL A&E ATTENDANCES
Mar-20	1,531,801
Apr-20	916,575
May-20	1,261,837
Jun-20	1,410,602
Jul-20	1,588,286
Aug-20	1,719,003
Sep-20	1,693,880
Oct-20	1,599,347
Nov-20	1,485,176
Dec-20	1,474,674
Jan-21	1,310,806
Feb-21	1,278,091
Mar-21	1,691,282
Apr-21	1,869,822

ALL A&E ATTENDANCES

Total	20,831,182
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Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ae-waiting-times-and-activity/ae-attendances-and-emergency-admissions-2021-22/>

■ Baby Care Units

Vicky Foxcroft: **[7882]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the report entitled Locked Out: the impact of COVID-19 on neonatal care, published by Bliss in May 2021 on the increased likelihood of mental health difficulties for parents with restricted access to neonatal units, what support his Department is providing to NHS Trusts to help ensure that they can facilitate full parental presence on neonatal units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Current guidance, published on 15 April 2021, sets out that Trusts should undertake a risk assessment, make changes to the configuration of space used to provide care, and use any available testing capacity to maximise opportunities for parents to be with their babies and to identify how to facilitate parental presence at all times of day.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has worked closely with Trusts to adopt the actions set out in current guidance, and to remove barriers which prevent Trusts being able to facilitate parental presence in neonatal units.

■ Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus

Sarah Owen: **[8748]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve mental health care for people bereaved as a result of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government recognizes that this has been an incredibly difficult time to grieve, with the challenging, yet necessary, measures put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 affecting the complexity of grief for many people.

Since March 2020, the Government has given £10.2 million to mental health charities, including bereavement support charities, to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing due to the impact of covid-19. We have also published our Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, backed by a one-off targeted investment of £500 million, to ensure that we have the right support in place this year.

A wide range of support continues to be available for the bereaved, and we will continue to work closely with bereavement services to assess how further support can be provided.

■ Blood: Contamination

Beth Winter:

[\[8762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people affected by the contaminated blood scandal live in (a) Cynon Valley, (b) Rhonda Cynon Taf and (c) Wales.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department does not hold data on either those affected in Wales nor beneficiaries of the Welsh support scheme. Since 2017, the support schemes have been devolved, in this case to the Welsh Infected Blood Support Scheme.

■ Cancer: Waiting Lists

Jim Shannon:

[\[7824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the backlog in cancer care is tackled consistently across the country.

Jo Churchill:

Local systems, drawing on advice and analysis from their Cancer Alliance, will ensure that there is sufficient local diagnostic and treatment capacity in place to meet cancer care needs consistently across England. Cancer patients will benefit from the additional £1 billion announced within Spending Review 2020 to tackle the elective backlog. The priorities set out in NHS England's Operational Planning Guidance 2021/22 for recovering cancer services focuses on reducing the number of people waiting for more than 62 days to pre-pandemic levels.

Cancer diagnosis and treatment has remained a priority throughout the pandemic, with 2.26 million general practitioner urgent cancer referrals and over 570,000 people treated for cancer between March 2020 and March 2021.

■ Cereals

Alex Norris:

[\[8720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Danish Whole Grain Partnership on increasing whole grain intakes.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has had no discussions with the Danish Whole Grain Partnership on increasing whole grain intake.

There is no agreed definition for the term wholegrain. Therefore, Government dietary guidelines do not give specific advice for wholegrain intake.

Government dietary advice, as depicted by the Eatwell Guide, is that people should choose whole grain or higher fibre versions of starchy carbohydrates wherever possible. The Eatwell guide can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

Alex Norris: [8721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average daily consumption of wholegrains in (a) adults, (b) teenagers and (c) children.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has not made an assessment of average daily consumption of wholegrains. There is no agreed definition for the term wholegrain and no specific recommendation for wholegrain consumption in the United Kingdom.

Government dietary advice, as depicted by the Eatwell Guide, is that people should choose whole grain or higher fibre versions of starchy carbohydrates wherever possible.

Fibre intake is assessed by the National Diet and Nutrition Survey. Latest data for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 shows that mean fibre intakes were below recommendations in all age groups. Nine percent of adults, four percent of children aged 11 to 18 years and 14% of children aged 4 to 10 years met the recommendation for fibre intake.

Alex Norris: [8722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the benefits for health of wholegrain consumption.

Jo Churchill:

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's (SACN's) Carbohydrates and Health report (2015) included an assessment of the relationship between dietary fibre and whole grains intake and cardio-metabolic, colorectal and oral health outcomes.

SACN found that there was strong evidence from prospective cohort studies that increased intakes of total dietary fibre, and particularly cereal fibre and wholegrain, are associated with a lower risk of cardio-metabolic disease and colorectal cancer.

Based on SACN's findings government recommends that adults consume 30 grams of dietary fibre each day and that this should be achieved through a variety of food sources.

The SACN Carbohydrates and Health report is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445503/SACN_Carbohydrates_and_Health.pdf

■ Children

Sarah Olney: [6399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 821 on Children, for what reason there is no single Cabinet minister responsible for the needs of babies and young children.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: The needs of babies and young children are covered by multiple Government departments and represented by Cabinet Ministers from those departments. The Government recognises the importance of these earliest years. In March 2021, the Government published “The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days”. This document set out a commitment to nominate a Cabinet Minister to ensure Start for Life is kept at the heart of decision-making across Government. The Prime Minister will decide who fulfils this role in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Rachael Maskell:**[\[7223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to speed up genome sequencing to meet the demands of covid-19 testing.

Jo Churchill:

Each and every process step in the journey from polymerase chain reaction test to actionable insight has been examined for opportunities to improve speed and efficiency. This work has already halved the end-to-end process time since the start of 2021. The Department’s operational improvement team is seeking out opportunities for continuous improvement to further reduce process cycle times. As well as improving existing operations, we have committed to continuous innovation and are pioneering new technologies and data analytics in diagnostic testing and genomic science to deliver step change in speed to insight and public health action. These include highly-automated, high-speed sequencing operations, genotyping assays and high-speed data analytical pipelines for faster detection of variants of concern.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Paul Girvan:**[\[2397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether (a) the covid-19 vaccines affect fertility and (b) those vaccines can safely be taken by pregnant women; and if he will publish available research on those issues.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is supporting the first United Kingdom COVID-19 vaccine study for pregnant women, funded by Pfizer. The NIHR continues to welcome funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including COVID vaccination and fertility or pregnancy. There is also a breadth of research supported by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) on COVID-19 and vaccines.

In the United States of America over 90,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated, mainly with Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, with data collected via the “v-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry”; these data have subsequently been analysed and the findings published in The New England Journal of Medicine (see Shimabukuro et

al., 2021 and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2104983>). This concluded that no obvious safety signals were observed among pregnant persons who received these COVID-19 vaccines. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation have therefore advised that pregnant women should be offered COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as people of the same age or risk group. There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on fertility or your chances of becoming pregnant.

Janet Daby:

[4700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of giving home carers the same priority for covid-19 vaccinations as professional care workers.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is the independent body made up of scientific and clinical experts who advise Government on COVID-19 vaccine prioritisation at a population level.

The JCVI has assessed and reviewed data to understand the association between occupation and the risk of exposure to COVID-19, the risk of COVID-19 disease and the risk of COVID-19 related severe outcomes. Based on their assessments, the JCVI concluded that frontline health and social care staff and adult carers should both be prioritised for vaccination in Phase One of the COVID-19 vaccination programme as they are at high risk of exposure to COVID-19 and may also expose vulnerable individuals and other staff members whilst providing care. This includes both paid professionals and unpaid carers, who provide care in people's own homes, and are prioritised in cohorts two and six respectively.

The Government has accepted this advice. Priority cohorts two and six have both been called forward for vaccination earlier this year.

Mr Clive Betts:

[7732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to assess the potential merits of covid-19 vaccine boosters for (a) people with blood cancer and (b) other people who are immunocompromised.

Nadhim Zahawi:

To ensure ongoing protection for the United Kingdom's population, particularly the most vulnerable, we are preparing for a potential booster vaccination programme. Whilst we are planning for several potential scenarios, final decisions on the timing and scope of the booster programme in terms of when to give boosters to which groups and with which vaccines will not be taken until later this year, in line with results from key clinical studies. Any decision on a booster vaccination programme will be informed by independent advice from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

As part of the National Core Studies Immunity Programme (NCSi), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is providing initial funding of £1.8 million for 12 months towards the OCTAVE study. The OCTAVE study will examine the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in clinically at-risk groups and will help to inform planning for the booster programme. This includes COVID-19 vaccine responses in patients with certain immunosuppressed conditions, including those with inflammatory disorders, high risk cancer patient groups, blood cancer patients and patients with severe kidney and liver disease. Cancer patient groups include those with blood cancer (leukaemia, myeloma, and bone marrow (stem cell) transplants).

Studies into the specific effect of a COVID-19 booster vaccine on certain groups have not yet been established. However, as part of the NCSi, UKRI is providing £3 million in funding towards a new research call to support projects examining one or both of the following areas - the nature and quality of COVID-19 vaccine responses, the mechanisms of immune failure that lead to either COVID-19 re-infection or vaccine breakthrough. As the nation's largest funder of health and care research, the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including on COVID-19 vaccination and immunocompromised individuals.

Mr Mark Harper:

[R] [8562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the efficacy of vaccination in preventing (a) transmission, (b) hospitalisation and (c) death arising from the B.1.617.2 variant of covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England (PHE) has published early estimates of vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease with the B.1.617.2 variant which are available at the following link:

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.05.22.21257658v1>

The number of hospitalised cases and deaths from the B.1.617.2 variant of COVID-19 are currently too small to estimate vaccine effectiveness against these outcomes. PHE will continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 vaccines on variant B.1.617.2.

Mr Mark Harper:

[R] [8563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people hospitalised with the B.1.617.2 variant of covid-19 to date were (a) unvaccinated and (b) vaccinated with (i) one dose or (ii) two doses.

Jo Churchill:

As of 25 May 2021, Public Health England has recorded 5,559 cases of B.1.617.2 infection with 201 cases attending emergency care. Of these 201 cases, 138 were unvaccinated at the time of presentation to emergency care. 52 had received a single dose of vaccine while five cases had received both doses. The vaccination status of six cases is unknown.

Dr Philippa Whitford:**[8628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of whether clinically extremely vulnerable children under 16 should be able to access covid-19 vaccines; and how many clinically extremely vulnerable children are still shielding because they do not have access to that vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Children under 16 years of age, even if they are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), are at low risk of serious morbidity and mortality from COVID-19. There is also a lack of safety and efficacy data for COVID-19 vaccines in children. Most children under the age of 16, including those who are CEV, are therefore not recommended for routine vaccination.

Given the very high risk of exposure to infection and outbreaks in residential settings, vaccination may be appropriate for those with severe neuro-disabilities who require frequent care in these settings. This option should be discussed between parents or guardians and the child's clinician.

As of 1 April, due to low prevalence, shielding advice has been paused for all clinically extremely vulnerable people, including children and young people. All CEV pupils should attend their school unless they are one of the very small number of pupils under paediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend. Pupils who live with someone who is CEV should continue to attend school as normal.

More information on children and COVID-19 vaccination can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/984310/Greenbook_chapter_14a_7May2021.pdf

Current guidance to individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable, including children, can be found at the following link:

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

■ Eating Disorders: Health Services**Robert Halfon:****[7793]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce waiting times for eating disorder services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, we will invest almost £1 billion extra by 2023/24 in community mental health services for adults with severe mental illness, such as eating disorders. In addition, an extra £58 million will be invested this financial year to accelerate the expansion of integrated primary and secondary care for this patient group

We have also set up the first waiting time standard for children and young people's eating disorder services with the aim that 95% of children with an eating disorder will receive treatment within one week for urgent cases and within four weeks for routine cases. Under the NHS Long Term Plan, £53 million of extra funding a year is planned to go into children and young people's community eating disorder services from 2021/22. We are also investing an extra £79 million in 2021/22 to significantly expand children's mental health services, including allowing 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services

We have also announced early intervention services for young people aged 16-25 with eating disorders in an additional 18 sites across the country, which will see people coming forward being contacted within 48 hours and beginning treatment within two weeks.

Robert Halfon:

[\[7794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide support to people with eating disorders.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 June 2021 to Question [5175](#).

■ Food: Labelling

Catherine West:

[\[1345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what engagement he is planning with eating disorder groups on proposed mandatory calorie labelling.

Emma Hardy:

[\[1422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the mandatory calorie labelling on menus on people suffering or recovering from eating disorders.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: We have been careful to consider the views of a wide range of experts in response to our public consultation on introducing mandatory out-of-home calorie labelling including representatives from eating disorder groups and we will continue with this engagement.

In response to consultation feedback, we have decided to exempt schools from the requirement to display calorie information given concerns about exposing children to calorie information in school settings and eating disorders. We have also included within the Regulations a provision which permits businesses to provide a menu without calorie information at the express request of the customer. As a result, people who may find viewing calorie information more difficult may be able to avoid this information in certain situations when eating out.

The final impact assessment for introducing mandatory calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector considered the potential effect on people living with eating disorders. The impact assessment is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903712/Calorie_Labelling_-_Impact_Assessment.pdf

We are increasing our investment into eating disorder services year-on-year, with an additional £2.3 billion for mental health services each year by 2023/24. We have also announced a further £500 million in 2021/22, which will support people with a variety of mental health conditions, including eating disorders.

Dan Jarvis: [2994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of his Department's proposals to introduce mandatory calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector for large businesses on (a) people with eating disorders and (b) the prevalence of eating disorders in the future.

Dan Jarvis: [2995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish the evidence for the decision to introduce mandatory calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector for large businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: Regulations were laid on 13 May that will require large businesses in England with 250 or more employees, including restaurants, cafes and takeaways, to display calorie information of non-prepacked food and soft drink items.

The Department has published an impact assessment detailing the likely effect the policy will have, including the potential effect of the policy on people living with eating disorders. This and the Government's response to its public consultation on calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector, set out the evidence used to support the policy. The impact assessment and consultation response are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/calorie-labelling-for-food-and-drink-served-outside-of-the-home>

Robert Halfon: [7792]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's timeframe is for the introduction of mandatory calorie labelling.

Jo Churchill:

Regulations were laid in Parliament on 13 May that will require large businesses in England with 250 or more employees, including restaurants, cafes, and takeaways, to display the calorie information of non-prepacked food and soft drink items they sell. The regulations will come into force from 6 April 2022 subject to Parliamentary approval.

Robert Halfon: [8585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of his Department's proposals to introduce

mandatory calorie labelling on trends in the number of people presenting for treatment of eating disorders.

Ben Lake:

[8703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with (a) groups representing people affected by eating disorders and (b) other stakeholders on proposals to require calorie labelling on menus.

Jo Churchill:

Ministers and officials in the Department have engaged with BEAT, the eating disorder charity, as well as other groups representing the views of people living with eating disorders, on several occasions since the Government published "Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives" last July. Discussions have included out-of-home calorie labelling. We have also been careful to consider the views of a wide range of experts in response to our public consultation on introducing mandatory out-of-home calorie labelling and we will continue with this engagement going forward.

The final impact assessment for introducing mandatory calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector considered the potential effect on people living with eating disorders. The impact assessment is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903712/Calorie_Labelling_-_Impact_Assessment.pdf

■ Health Services: Females

Alex Norris:

[7916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the wide scope of issues covered by the Women's Health Strategy on the effectiveness of that strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No assessment has been made on the potential effect of the wide scope of issues covered by the Women's Health Strategy on the effectiveness of that strategy.

To ensure the strategy reflects what women identify as priorities, the Government launched a Call for Evidence on 8 March, which will run until 13 June.

The evidence gathered through the call for evidence will inform the priorities, content and actions for the strategy.

Alex Norris:

[7917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) access to and (b) quality of menstrual health services; what plans his Department has to further improve menstrual health services in the health system beyond the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Menstrual health services are predominantly provided by general practitioners (GPs). GP practices have remained open throughout the pandemic, offering face to face appointments to those who need them as well as telephone and online consultations. To help expand general practice capacity, an additional £270 million of funding was made available from November 2020 until September 2021 to ensure GPs and their teams can continue to support all patients.

No assessment has been made on the quality of menstrual health services during the covid-19 outbreak, as this information is not held centrally by NHS England.

The Government are embarking on the first Women's Health Strategy for England. To ensure the Women's Health Strategy reflects what women identify as priorities, the government launched a 14 week call for evidence which will run until 13 June 2021 to gather women's experiences and views regarding their health and care. All evidence regarding menstrual health services will be carefully considered as part of this ongoing work.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs**Thangam Debonnaire:****[7848]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will make pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) available at pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is now routinely available in the specialist sexual and reproductive health services throughout the country.

The settings in which PrEP to be made available outside of sexual health services, such as pharmacies, will be considered as part of our ongoing work on the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and the HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish later this year.

■ Integrated Care Systems**Margaret Greenwood:****[7202]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all local authorities within an Integrated Care System (ICS) footprint will be on the ICS NHS Board for their area; and what percentage of an ICS NHS Board will be made up of (a) political representatives and (b) officers from local authorities.

Edward Argar:

The proposed legislation will set out minimum membership of the Integrated Care Board, which will need to include at least one local authority representative. Local areas can, by local agreement, go beyond the legislative minimum requirements in order to address their specific needs. Any further board members should be detailed in the Integrated Care Board's constitution. The proposed legislation is designed to be flexible, allowing local areas to design structures that work best for them.

■ Integrated Care Systems and NHS Trusts: Debts

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[7841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Integrated Care Systems (ICS) will be allowed to run deficits when placed on a statutory footing; what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on that matter; whether NHS Trusts will be allowed to run deficits after the financial year 2023-24; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the combined impact of the inability of ICSs to run deficits and the removal of the ability of NHS Trusts to run deficits on the delivery of NHS services.

Edward Argar:

We are proposing to establish statutory Integrated Care Systems, made up of an Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Partnership (together referred to as the ICS). We are also proposing that Integrated Care Board working with their partner Foundation Trusts and National Health Service Trusts will need to balance spending across the system.

ICSs will be key bodies for financial accountability and financial governance arrangements will need to reflect that with updated guidance to reflect these changes. It is possible in principle for an NHS Trust within a system to run a deficit, but for the system as a whole to be in financial balance. However, there will continue to be consideration of how efficiently a provider uses its resources and how financially sustainable it will be over the longer term.

The NHS Long Term Plan and the additional associated funding being provided has been set with the ambition that all organisations are in financial balance by 2023/24. NHS Funding beyond 2023/24 is for a future Spending Review.

The Department has published its legislative proposals including for system accountabilities. These were agreed across Government including with HMT and did not involve a direct discussion with the Chancellor.

■ Kidney Cancer

Alex Norris:

[\[7913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of clinical guidance for the (a) diagnosis, (b) treatment and (c) management of kidney cancer.

Jo Churchill:

No recent assessment has been made.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical guidance on diagnosis, treatment and management of kidney cancer was developed through standard process, by independent committees made up of health and care professionals, people who use services, and carers.

The clinical guidance for kidney (Renal) cancer is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng12/chapter/1-Recommendations-organised-by-site-of-cancer#urological-cancers>

Alex Norris: [7915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement of £325 million for diagnostic equipment announced in the Spending Review 2020, how much and what proportion of that funding will be allocated to pathology and radiology services to improve the diagnosis of kidney cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The funding is to be used for the purchase of new diagnostic machines and the funding of Community Diagnostic Hubs. As such it cannot be determined how much will be spent specifically on improving the diagnosis of kidney cancer.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mr John Baron: [7106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 18 February 2021, and follow up letters of 1 March, 16 April and the 19 May 2021, from the Member for Basildon and Billericay regarding his constituent with reference JB31518.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 2 June 2021.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children**

Ellie Reeves: [5248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Long Term Plan goal that all children who need specialist mental health care can access it, what steps he has taken to ensure that the youngest children can access specialist mental health care.

Ellie Reeves: [5249]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to finding by the Parent-Infant Foundation in 2019 that 42 per cent of CCGs reported local CAMHS services would not accept a referral for a child aged two and under, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that NHS CAMHS services do not turn away children under two.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We remain committed to the aim of the NHS Long Term Plan to invest at least an extra £2.3 billion a year into mental health by 2023/24. This will see an additional 345,000 children and young people a year, including the youngest children, accessing NHS-funded mental health support by 2023/24, if they need it.

Commissioning mental health services for the youngest age groups is a local matter for clinical commission groups. However, the Government recently published its Early Years Review which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>.

Babies and the youngest children in England will get a better start in life following the publication of a review into reducing inequalities in the first 1,001 days of life. This includes every new parent and carer being able to access compassionate and timely mental health support if they need it. To implement this work, the Department will work with Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement as well as local authorities to map out the Start for Life journey of parents and carers that captures how they experience digital, virtual and telephone-based services during the 1,001 critical days from conception to the age of 2. We will ensure parents and carers have an NHS-branded online 'one stop shop' to access all the information they need.

■ **Mental Health Services: Doctors**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[3090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health doctors there were in (a) 2010 and (b) 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care, local authorities or other providers.

As at September 2010 there were 8,943 full time equivalent (FTE) HCHS doctors in the mental health workforce in the National Health Service in England, as at December 2020 this was 9,725 FTE, the latest available data.

Mental health service provision is also commissioned by the NHS from private sector providers. The above figures do not reflect staffing in the private sector.

■ **Mental Health Services: Hospital Beds**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[3088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health beds there were in (a) 2010 and (b) 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not collected in the format requested as data is only available for financial years.

■ **Mental Health Services: Nurses**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[3089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health nurses there were in (a) 2010 and (b) 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the independent professional regulator for nurses and midwives in the United Kingdom and is responsible for nurse and midwifery registration. The NMC's latest published registration data as at March 2021 show there were 71,385 nurses resident in England registered in the field of practice 'mental health nurses', based on headcount. As of March 2010 there were 71,793.

■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists**Tim Farron:**[\[5174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to publish the preliminary results from the four week waiting time pilot for adult community mental health services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement is testing four-week waiting time standards as part of the delivery of new models of integrated primary and community mental health care. Twelve early implementer sites were selected in 2019-20 to pilot the new models over 2 years and test four-week waiting times as part of this transformation.

Timescales for publication of this early implementer learning is under review as the pandemic significantly impacted the timeline for these early implementer sites.

However testing has now resumed in all sites and learning is being collated at a national level. These insights will be fed into the national CRS programme.

■ NHS 111**Justin Madders:**[\[297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of patients who called 111 First and following assessment (a) attended accident and emergency via a booked arrival time appointment, (b) were directed to another urgent care setting, (c) were directed to a primary care setting and (d) were not directed to attend any setting, in each month since December 2020.

Edward Argar:

Information is not held in the format requested as NHS111 First is not a separate service from NHS 111.

■ NHS and Social Services: Migrant Workers**Sarah Owen:**[\[8746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 6485, when he plans that data on the number of successful refunds of the Immigration Health Surcharge to health and social care workers will be centrally validated so that that data can be published.

Edward Argar:

The Department of Health and Social Care and Home Office are continuing to consider to options for validation and will provide a further update in due course.

■ NHS: Migrant Workers**Sarah Owen:**[\[7290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 4046 on NHS: Migrant Workers, if he will collect data on the number of NHS workers from overseas who (a) are charged the Immigration Health Surcharge and (b) successfully received a refund of the Immigration Health Surcharge since the government announced the policy in May 2020.

Edward Argar:

The Department of Health and Social Care and Home Office will continue to consider the most effective way of ensuring data transparency. Our partners are responsible for collecting information on the operation of the policy, which is used to maintain an effective service.

■ NHS: Ventilators**Chi Onwurah:**[\[8603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ventilators were built by Dyson for the NHS in the last 12 months; and how many of those ventilators were used.

Edward Argar:

No ventilators were provided by The Technology Partnership, for which Dyson was the manufacturing partner, to the NHS via the Ventilator Challenge.

■ Obesity: Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[7200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of obesity among (a) children and (b) adults in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle obesity in those areas.

Jo Churchill:

There has been no such assessment because there is no data covering obesity trends during the COVID-19 pandemic as the Health Survey England (HSE) fieldwork was suspended in March 2020. Previously the HSE found approximately a third of adults were classified as obese in surveys over the last 20 years, and before then (1993 – 2000) obesity levels had increased.

We published 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' in July 2020. The strategy demonstrates an overarching campaign to reduce obesity, takes forward actions from the childhood obesity plan and sets out measures

to get the nation fit and healthy, protect against COVID-19 and protect the National Health Service.

As part of delivering the strategy, on 23 March the Government announced it was dedicating £34.9 million of funding to support the expansion of local authority weight management services for adults, children, and families in 2021/22. As part of this, Coventry City Council has been allocated £331,229 and local authorities in the West Midlands a combined total of £3,968,705 from the Adult Weight Management Services Grant. All local authorities were also invited to submit an expression of interest for funding from a second grant to test the expansion of behavioural weight management services for children and families and pilot an intervention to improve access to local services for children identified as overweight or obese through the national child measurement programme. Successful applicants will be announced shortly.

■ Pharmacy: Finance

Sarah Olney: [\[7897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on delivering more sustainable funding for community pharmacies.

Sarah Olney: [\[7898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to review the role of pharmacy and adjust the funding structure for pharmacy to enable that sector to play a bigger part in primary care provision.

Jo Churchill:

In 2019, the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement, with support from HM Treasury, agreed the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) 2019-24 five-year deal with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC). The CPCF commits £2.592 billion annually to the sector. There are ongoing discussions with HM Treasury about the delivery of the CPCF.

The five-year deal sets out how it is planned to further integrate, community pharmacy into the National Health Service, delivering more clinical services and embedding their role in providing advice on medicines and preventing ill health.

NHS111 can now refer patients to a community pharmacist for minor illnesses or the urgent supply of a prescribed medicine. At the end of 2020, we extended this service to general practitioner surgeries, who can now also formally refer patients to community pharmacy for consultation. Earlier this year, we introduced the Discharge Medicines Service with referrals from hospitals to community pharmacies to support patients with their medicines following discharge. We expect to introduce more clinical services in community pharmacy to relieve pressure on other parts of the NHS and play a larger role in primary care provision.

■ **Pregnancy: Screening**

Alex Sobel: [\[7934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to enable women with high risk pregnancies to access remote monitoring of their pregnancy in the event that they do not have access to the internet.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service has made appropriate arrangements to meet the needs of monitoring all expectant mothers, including offering alternatives to virtual consultation in cases of no internet access. These can include home visits, face-to-face hospital appointments and telephone consultations.

■ **Social Services: Reform**

Bambos Charalambous: [\[6410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a timetable for adult social care reforms.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: The Government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals in 2021.

This is a complex area and a range of options are being considered. We are working closely with local and national partners to ensure our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives, including of those with lived experience of the care sector.

■ **Surgery: Waiting Lists**

Colleen Fletcher: [\[7199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people who experienced the cancellation of an operation on more than one occasion in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last three years; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of cancelled operations in those areas.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held. The collection of data on cancelled operations has been paused in order to release capacity across the National Health Service to support the pandemic response.

Therefore, no estimate or formal assessment has been made on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of cancelled operations in those areas.

■ **Tobacco**

Mr David Jones: [\[7119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 187176, whether he plans to delay the publication of the

Tobacco Control Plan to take into account the conclusions of the Post Implementation Review of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015.

Mr David Jones:

[\[7120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the forthcoming Tobacco Control Plan.

Jo Churchill:

The Department plans to publish a new Tobacco Control Plan (TCP) later this year. The Post Implementation Review of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015 will also be published by the end of the year. Evidence gathered from this Review will be considered as part of the development of the new TCP.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[7954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that students studying abroad in the 2021-22 academic year will have received their covid-19 vaccinations before travelling.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are currently no plans to prioritise students specifically as a group. This includes those studying abroad next academic year. Students aged 18 years old and over are prioritised on grounds of age in phase two of the COVID-19 vaccine programme if they have not been vaccinated as part of phase one. Phase two offers vaccination to all those aged 18 to 49 years old unless they fall into a higher cohort group due to age or pre-existing health condition which puts them in phase one.

The Government is working closely with the devolved administrations, the higher education sector and health services across the United Kingdom to ensure that all students are able to access the vaccine efficiently and conveniently where they are eligible. The Government advises those who may be unable to receive a full course of vaccination in the UK to notify clinicians of this before they receive their vaccination. For any foreign travel, the Government advises checking GOV.UK for relevant information including information on healthcare provision.

We are on track to offer a first dose of COVID-19 vaccination to all those aged 18 years old and over by 31 July.

■ **Weddings: Social Distancing**

Lisa Nandy:

[\[7170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to announce the removal of all covid-19 social distancing restrictions on weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and receptions.

Jo Churchill:

At Step 4 of the Roadmap or no earlier than 21 June, the Government aims to remove all restrictions on weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and receptions, subject to the outcome of the social distancing review and also the events research programme.

■ Yellow Card Scheme**Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[7153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the extent of under-reporting of adverse drug reactions to the Yellow Card scheme.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The reporting rate for spontaneous adverse drug reactions (ADR) is variable and can depend on a multitude of factors. Although some historical studies have estimated only 10% of ADRs are reported, the actual rate is unknown and variable because it is influenced by public awareness and seriousness of the event.

HOME OFFICE**■ Antisemitism: Demonstrations****Robert Halfon:**[\[901026\]](#)

What steps she is taking to tackle anti-Semitism at public demonstrations.

Priti Patel:

The grotesque antisemitic scenes to which my Rt Hon Friend refers were utterly chilling and disgraceful. And this sort of behaviour will not be tolerated.

The police must take the toughest possible action against any form of antisemitism. Jewish people must feel safe.

Everyone has freedom of speech and the right to protest peacefully. That does not include the right to be racist, to harass anyone, or to incite hatred or violence.

Moreover, holding Jewish people collectively responsible for the actions – real or imagined - of the Israeli state is antisemitic. Anyone who engages in antisemitic behaviour must feel the full force of the law.

■ Armed Forces: Immigration**Jamie Stone:**[\[7900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Commonwealth service leavers who are eligible to apply for Leave to Remain have applied for Leave to Remain.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of Commonwealth service leavers who are eligible to apply for Leave to Remain or the number of applications received from Commonwealth service leavers.

Commonwealth service leavers can apply for an immigration status on a variety of routes. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

Applications from Commonwealth service leavers are grouped together with other categories in our published statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2021/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>

■ Asylum: Finance

Margaret Ferrier: [901027]

For what reason her Department continues to monitor asylum seekers' usage of Aspen Cards.

Chris Philp:

Aspen cards are prepaid debit cards used to provide financial support to destitute asylum seekers. Their use is recorded and will be investigated where there are safeguarding concerns, for example to help locate a person who has gone missing, or potential breaches of the conditions of support to which the recipients have agreed, such as to prevent fraud.

■ Asylum: Housing

John Healey: [7733]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the Home Department of 25 May 2021, column 81WH on the Asylum Dispersal System, if she will publish a list of the local authorities which have adopted voluntary dispersal agreements.

John Healey: [7734]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the Home Department of 25 May 2021, column 81WH on the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, if she will publish the 40 local authorities which have adopted the voluntary dispersal agreements but have providers unable to find suitable properties for the Asylum Dispersal System.

Chris Philp:

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support> (opens in a new tab) Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 27 May 2021.

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in dispersal accommodation for the first time in each quarter in each of the last two years, by local

authority. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

John Healey: [\[7735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the Home Department of 25 May 2021, column 81WH on the Asylum Dispersal System, how many inspections her Department conducted of provider properties for the Asylum Dispersal Scheme in 2019-20.

John Healey: [\[7736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the Home Department of 25 May 2021, column 82WH, how many provider properties under the Asylum Dispersal Scheme her Department has inspected by region in each year since 2010.

Kevin Foster:

As well as the many tens of thousands of property inspections carried out by our providers, 2,525 property inspections were carried out by Home Office staff in 2019/20. Routine Home Office inspections were paused towards the end of the year due to the emerging Covid-19 crisis but have now recommenced in line with coronavirus guidelines.

Data on the number of properties the Home Office has inspected since 2010 by area is not held in a reportable format and can only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual inspection records.

■ Crime and Justice Task Force

Crispin Blunt: [\[R\] \[8523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2021 to Question 2169, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the Crime and Justice Taskforce membership not including representation from the (a) Department of Health and Social Care, (b) Department for Education, (c) Department of Work and Pensions, or (d) Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, unlike its predecessor, the Drug Strategy Board.

Kit Malthouse:

The membership of the Crime and Justice Task Force is available at Gov.uk. Other Cabinet Ministers will be invited to attend according to the agenda.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Crispin Blunt: [\[R\] \[8524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 5140, how the Government plans to assess the (a) effectiveness and (b) value for money of enforcement activity in circumstances where no evaluation framework has been developed for the 2017 Drug Strategy.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is taking a whole-system response to tackling drug misuse. That is why we have committed £148m this year to cut drug-related crime and support people into recovery, this includes £40m for disrupting drug supply and county lines, £80m for drug treatment and a further £28m for Project ADDER (Addiction, Disruption, Diversion, Enforcement and Recovery).

We have robust arrangements in place to oversee delivery of this work including outcomes framework which is monitored through a cross government Drugs Misuse Delivery Board.

In addition, on enforcement specifically, we have robust governance and monitoring/evaluation frameworks in place to monitor the impact of our county lines programme and Project ADDER through monthly Task and Finish Group meetings and Programme Delivery Board.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate our drugs misuse programmes to learn what is most effective in combatting drug misuse and will continue to work together across Government Departments on this.

■ Drugs: Smuggling**Crispin Blunt:****[R] [8525]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 5143 what the total cost is of Operation Venetic to date; and how she plans to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of Operation Venetic when no assessment has been conducted of the short-term and long-term impact to drug availability or demand in the UK.

Kit Malthouse:

Op VENETIC had a major impact on Organised Crime Groups involved in drugs trafficking, firearms trafficking, serious violence and money laundering. Many suspects that would otherwise have evaded justice due to their use of this criminally dedicated secure communication system are now facing prosecution for serious offences and face losing the financial benefits of organised crime due to proceeds of crime investigations.

The operation has also made a significant contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Serious Organised Crime in the UK, how it operates and its vulnerabilities, which is assisting law enforcement operations going forwards.

Whilst it is not possible to define an overall cost for this complex, large scale multi agency operation, over £56 million in criminal cash has so far been seized as a result of this operation.

■ Educational Visits: EU Countries

Anna McMorrin: [7902]

To ask the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the withdrawal of European countries from Collective Passports recognition scheme on educational and recreational school visits from the UK to Europe.

Kevin Foster:

A number of countries have declined to continue accepting UK issued Collective Passports this year, but many will continue to accept them. Given that, we have not made an assessment of the effect this change will have on educational and recreational school visits from the UK to Europe.

■ Fraud

Mr Steve Baker: [7162]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to encourage collaboration between (a) Ofcom, (b) the Telecommunications sector and (c) the National Crime Agency on reducing fraud; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is exploring a range of different measures aimed at tackling the criminal abuse of mobile telecommunications across a range of different crime types including fraud.

As set out in our Economic Crime Plan (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/economic-crime-plan-2019-to-2022>), we are clear that a public- private partnership is essential in tackling fraud. Government, telecommunications providers, law enforcement, regulators, including Ofcom, and consumer groups are in regular conversation with the aim of protecting the public from these crimes. This includes developing a voluntary charter of the actions that telecoms companies will take to prevent fraud.

The Government will build on this work through our Fraud Action Plan, an ambitious approach grounded in prevention, education, effective enforcement and regulatory reforms that will be published after the Spending Review.

■ Human Rights: Postgraduate Education

Brendan O'Hara: [8626]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the meeting of 25 May 2021 between the Rt Hon Member for Witham and the Bahraini Minister of Interior, whether her Department held discussions with the University of Huddersfield on the establishment of a PhD in human rights.

Kit Malthouse:

The government is committed to supporting Bahrain as it continues to make important security, police and justice reforms. We will continue to work closely together to promote security and stability in the Gulf region and across the world. This

support includes work between a range of organisations including police forces, government and academic institutions.

The Home Office has not discussed a PhD in human rights with the University of Huddersfield and this did not form part of the Home Secretary's meeting with the Bahraini Minister of Interior.

■ Immigration: Armed Forces

Stephanie Peacock: [8701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain were processed via the SET (AF) route in each of the last three years.

Stephanie Peacock: [8702]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of successful Indefinite Leave to Remain applications were via the SET (AF) route in each of the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

We do not publish the specific data relating to grants of ILR made under the SET(AF) route, as to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

The published statistics relating to individuals granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom are recorded together as part of published Migration Statistics and can be located at:

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

Dan Jarvis: [901018]

What steps she is taking to support non-UK (a) veterans and (b) armed forces dependants with regularising their immigration status.

Chris Philp:

I am immensely proud that brave servicemen and women from around the world want to call the UK their home after their service.

The Government has launched a public consultation on how we recognise their contribution by not only smoothing the pathway to residency and citizenship, but also by waiving the fee for doing so after 12 years of service.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Allan Dorans: [7276]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that European citizens who are resident in the UK who may not be aware of the requirement to apply for settled status because they are (a) elderly, including those living in local authority and private care homes and suffering from conditions such as dementia, and (b) young people who may be in local authority and

foster care have access to information to enable them to apply for that status under the EU Settlement Scheme by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

Kevin Foster:

Since the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) opened in March 2019, the Home Office has undertaken a broad range of communications and stakeholder engagement activity to encourage EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members to apply for and obtain status. This has included targeted stakeholder engagement with hard to reach and vulnerable groups, including collaborative work with local authorities, and a comprehensive, £7.9 million advertising campaign.

We are committed to making sure everybody eligible for the EUSS can apply, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. We have awarded £22 million of funding to a network of now 72 charities and community organisations across the UK, to ensure important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach and no one is left behind. These organisations have helped more than 250,000 vulnerable people to apply to the EUSS already, including elderly people living in local authority and private care homes and those suffering from dementia.

In England, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services is continuing to engage with social care departments across the country. They are delivering engagement webinars to key stakeholders such as the Principal Social Workers and the Care Provider Alliance to provide information and are signposting the support available through the grant-funded network.

In Scotland, Citizen's Advice Scotland are working with care providers in the Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling local authority areas.

In Northern Ireland, Advice NI and Step are funded to provide support to the care sector.

In Wales, support is provided by both Newport Mind and TGP Cymru.

In relation to children in care and care leavers, the Home Office continues to engage extensively with relevant stakeholders, such as the Department for Education, local authorities and local government associations in England, Wales and Scotland, Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland and the Association of Directors of Children's Services, to ensure staff and applicants are supported and informed throughout the application process.

The Home Office also holds a programme of teleconferences for local authority staff working with children in care, which provide a forum to exchange information, ask questions and raise issues.

Peter Grant:

[\[7864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of EU citizens residing in the UK who still need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The total number of applications received up to 31 April 2021 was 5.42 million (5,423,300).

The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications received can be found on the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics' web page available at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme and cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK.

The published figures include non-EEA family members, Irish nationals, and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU population.

Furthermore, the population estimates do not take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

Owen Thompson:**[7877]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what options are available to EU nationals who seek to apply for settled status and who do not own bio-chipped documents.

Kevin Foster:

Any EU nationals who wish to apply to the European Union Settlement Scheme who do not own a bio-chipped document can still apply through the postal route.

A step by step guide on how to apply can be found on gov.uk at

www.gov.uk/eusettledstatus

■ Immigration: Glasgow**Kenny MacAskill:****[7280]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent representations her Department has received from the Scottish Government on incidents at Kenmure Street, Glasgow on 13 May 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

There was Ministerial contact on 13 May.

■ Licensing Laws: Sexual Offences**Thangam Debonnaire:****[7855]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the Licensing Act 2003 guidance in order to make a licence for the sale of alcohol contingent on the requirement for the licensee to have a policy on responding to risk of or actual sexual misconduct and assault in premises.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing all forms of sexual misconduct and assault.

Under the Licensing Act 2003, all licensed premises must comply with four statutory licensing objectives, one of which is the prevention of crime and disorder. Where there are concerns about an application for a licence arising from the way the premises propose to operate, the customers it will attract, or the incidence of sexual offences in its area, a licensing committee may decide to place conditions on its licence requiring measures to prevent sexual offending.

We continue to focus on establishing effective partnerships between the police, local authorities, local partnership schemes and businesses to take effective actions against alcohol-related crime in the night time economy and on licensed premises.

■ Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: Scotland**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[7283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent representations he has received from the Scottish Government on requesting devolution of the powers under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (a) in whole and (b) in part.

Kit Malthouse:

The Crime and Policing Minister met Angela Constance MSP, the Minister for Drug Policy in the Scottish Government, earlier this year to discuss the best way to tackle drug misuse across the UK, including opportunities to work collaboratively on this shared agenda. No recent representations have been made by the Scottish Government to devolve powers under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. While the legal framework on the misuse of drugs is reserved to the UK, the Scottish Government has its own approach to tackling drug misuse in areas where responsibility is devolved, including healthcare, criminal justice, housing, and education. The Government has no plans to devolve the powers under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Tackling drug misuse is a priority for this government and it clear that action is needed across all four nations to reduce the harms caused. We are committed to working across the UK and continuing to have regular contact with the Scottish Government on this issue.

■ Overseas Students: English Language**Stephen Timms:**[\[901022\]](#)

What progress she has made on resolving the immigration status of overseas students who have been falsely accused of cheating in English language tests.

Chris Philp:

I am grateful to the Rt. Hon Gentleman for this question, I know he has been a staunch advocate on this issue.

As the Rt. Hon member is aware there is an important Upper Tribunal judgment pending on this matter and it is right to wait for the outcome of that. But we have been reviewing our approach in the meantime and I will meet the Hon. Member once that review is complete.

■ Overseas Students: Self-employed

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[7987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits to the economy of increasing the number of graduate entrepreneurs by amending legislation to (a) encourage and (b) allow international students to be self-employed.

Kevin Foster:

The UK welcomes international students and recognises the valuable contribution they make to the UK economy. Students can switch into the Graduate or Start-up routes once they have completed their studies; self-employment is permitted under each of these routes.

The Graduate route, which launches on 1 July, enables students who successfully complete an eligible qualification to stay and work or look for work for two years (three for PhD students), including self-employment.

Those on the Graduate route who establish an innovative, viable and scalable business will be able to switch into the Innovator route subject to securing the required endorsement from a relevant endorsing body.

Students can also switch into the Start-up route. The Start-up route is reserved for early-stage, high-potential entrepreneurs starting an innovative, viable and scalable business in the UK for the first time.

The restrictions on employment whilst studying on the Student route are designed to ensure their primary purpose for being in the UK is to study as indicated, rather than to work.

■ Police

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[7244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to reduce the number of single crewed police officers on duty.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 3 June 2021]: This Government is committed to supporting and protecting our police and we take their welfare very seriously. Every Chief Constable has a responsibility to manage and support their workforce effectively, ensuring the welfare of all officers and staff. Decisions on the deployment of frontline police officers and their duties are for Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners and this includes decisions on crewing.

This Government is ensuring the police have the necessary resources, tools and powers they need to keep themselves and the public safe. This includes the recruitment of an additional 20,000 additional police officers to bolster capacity and up to £15.8 billion of funding in 2021/22, an increase of up to £600 million compared to 2020/21. The overall police funding available to PCCs has increased by up to £668 million (5.1% in cash terms) in 2021/22.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[7245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there is an increased risk to police officers or the public in policing situations where police officers are single crewed compared to being partnered.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to supporting and protecting our police and we take their welfare very seriously. Every Chief Constable has a responsibility to manage and support their workforce effectively, ensuring the welfare of all officers and staff. Decisions on the deployment of frontline police officers and their duties are for Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners and this includes decisions on crewing.

This Government is ensuring the police have the necessary resources, tools and powers they need to keep themselves and the public safe. This includes the recruitment of an additional 20,000 additional police officers to bolster capacity and up to £15.8 billion of funding in 2021/22, an increase of up to £600 million compared to 2020/21. The overall police funding available to PCCs has increased by up to £668 million (5.1% in cash terms) in 2021/22.

Gary Sambrook:

[\[901025\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to increase the number of police officers.

Kit Malthouse:

We are increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 by March 2023. The increase over three years is unprecedented and reflects the biggest recruitment drive in decades.

Police forces across England and Wales have already recruited 8,771 additional officers, exceeding the first target of 6,000 additional officers by March 2021.

■ **Police: Finance**

Suzanne Webb:

[\[901020\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to increase financial support for the police.

Kit Malthouse:

In February, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22.

This is an increase of up to £600 million compared to 2020/21 and cements our commitment to give the police the resources they need to keep the public safe.

Sarah Atherton: [\[901021\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to increase financial support for the police.

Kit Malthouse:

In February, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22.

This is an increase of up to £600 million compared to 2020/21 and cements our commitment to give the police the resources they need to keep the public safe.

Andy Carter: [\[901030\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to increase financial support for the police.

Kit Malthouse:

In February, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22.

This is an increase of up to £600 million compared to 2020/21 and cements our commitment to give the police the resources they need to keep the public safe.

Sara Britcliffe: [\[901031\]](#)

What plans her Department has to increase police funding.

Kit Malthouse:

In February, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22.

This is an increase of up to £600 million compared to 2020/21 and cements our commitment to give the police the resources they need to keep the public safe.

■ Refugees: Children

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[7231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to provide safe and legal routes to the UK for unaccompanied child refugees.

Chris Philp:

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

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-of-family-reunion-options-in-the-immigration-rules>

■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes

Jess Phillips: [\[7833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to set up a redress scheme to ensure that all eligible survivors of trafficking and slavery who were denied subsistence payments are able to receive the back-dated payments.

Victoria Atkins:

We are aware that between 1 April 2015 – 30 November 2019, individuals who were in receipt of financial support payments during their time in the (then) Victim Care Contract (VCC) could have seen their support payments reduced as a result of them receiving alternative sources of income. This was in a way that was not in line with published policy or with the wording of the VCC. When uncovered, this practice was ceased in November 2019.

As back-payments may be appropriate in some cases, we are currently working on a process to establish individual eligibility and considering back-payment mechanisms.

We continue to work diligently to finalise these considerations, to provide the most effective remedy to those who could have been affected by incorrect financial support reductions. We will provide further details as our work progresses.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites

Rachael Maskell: [\[7868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential detrimental effects of policing by consent on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities parked on unauthorised sites.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life. We are equally clear that we will not tolerate law breaking and we are determined to ensure police have the powers they need to support and serve their communities.

We expect police to continue to undertake enforcement action in compliance with their equality and human rights obligations.

■ UK Border Force: Shipping

Bob Seely: [\[901024\]](#)

What steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure that British shipyards can compete in procurement processes for UK Border Force vessels.

Chris Philp:

Earlier this year, the Secretary of State for Defence announced a refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy. This will outline the Government's plans for

shipbuilding programmes and how it intends to set the conditions for a globally successful, innovative and sustainable national shipbuilding enterprise.

Naturally, the Home Office and specifically Border Force is fully engaged with the strategy refresh as part of its programme to renew our maritime capabilities.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

Mrs Natalie Elphicke:

[901023]

What steps her Department is taking to stop illegal immigration across the English Channel.

Chris Philp:

The danger to life from Channel crossings and the criminality behind it is simply unacceptable.

Journeys are often illegally-facilitated and totally unnecessary; France and other EU countries are safe with fully functioning asylum systems.

We are working tirelessly to make this route unviable.

We are introducing legislation to fix our broken asylum system and create a fairer and firmer system.

■ **Visas**

Daisy Cooper:

[8744]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will introduce a system to enable visa applications, which were submitted when the priority service was not available, to be upgraded to the priority service for faster processing.

Kevin Foster:

There are no plans to introduce any system to allow customers to upgrade to the priority service if this was not available at the time the visa application was made.

Should there be compelling or compassionate grounds for a faster decision to be made the customer should inform UKVI.

■ **Visas: Hong Kong**

Sarah Owen:

[7289]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from Hong Kong have successfully taken up a British National (Overseas) visa since that visa scheme was introduced.

Kevin Foster:

Information on how many visas for the Hong Kong BN(O) route have been granted between 31 January and 31 March was published in the quarterly migration statistics release on 27 May and can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Build Out Rates Independent Review**

Steve Reed: [7192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Independent review of build out: final report, published in October 2018, which of the recommendations of that review his Department has implemented.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government published its response to the Letwin report at Spring Statement 2019, with a full statement to the House by the then Communities Secretary on 13 March 2019. Since then, we have embarked an ambitious planning reform agenda, with faster build out a key objective. The Government consulted on this agenda in the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper and we are now considering responses before setting out the proposed way forward.

■ Building Safety Fund

Daisy Cooper: [8743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish a list of companies that have received funds as Responsible Entities following applications to the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

We are unable to publish the names of individual responsible entities that have received funds from the Building Safety Fund on grounds that it may identify individual buildings. This reflects the position of the Government not to reveal the identity of high-rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding systems on public safety grounds. The latest Building Safety Fund statistics are available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics

■ Business Premises: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney: [7896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Code of Practice for commercial property relationships during the covid-19 pandemic, whether his Department has plans to financially support commercial tenants whose landlords will not work together to find temporary arrangements outside of the existing letter of their leases in order to create a shared recovery plan.

Eddie Hughes:

On 6 April the Government launched a Call for Evidence on commercial rents to help monitor the overall progress of negotiations between tenants and landlords. The Call for Evidence also sought views on steps that Government could take after 30 June, ranging from a phased withdrawal of current protections to legislative options targeted at those businesses most impacted by COVID-19. This closed on 4 May and

Government is now analysing the feedback before making an announcement on next steps in due course.

To support businesses through the pandemic the Government introduced an unprecedented package of Government-backed and guaranteed loans, grants, tax waivers and deferrals, and other measures aimed at preserving otherwise viable businesses and the millions of jobs that they support.

■ Decent Homes Standard Review

Dan Carden: [\[7930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the upcoming Decent Homes Standard Review will consider the cost of retro-fitting existing council homes and funding.

Dan Carden: [\[7931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Decent Homes Standard Review, whether the review will estimate the overall cost for council Housing Revenue Accounts of proposed improvements.

Eddie Hughes:

We will review the Decent Homes Standard and consider whether it needs to be updated to ensure it is delivering what is needed for safety and decency now, including on energy efficiency and green spaces. The Social Housing White Paper committed to review the Decent Homes Standard to consider if it should be updated. The Review is in two stages, with the first step considering the case for change. If the evidence demonstrates that we need to revise the Standard, we will consider the strategic, economic and management case for new criteria as a second stage of the review.

■ Housing: Insulation

Stephen Doughty: [\[7188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implementation of new guidance on the requirements for EWS1 forms by UK lenders that came into effect from 5 April 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG estimates that nearly 500,000 leaseholders should not require an EWS1 form, following the new EWS1 valuation guidance from RICS, published in March 2021. Most major lenders, representing roughly 80% of the mortgage market, have said that they will adopt the RICS guidance, or already take a markedly less risk-averse approach.

Recent data from one major lender suggests that an EWS1 already exists for 50% of mortgage applications where one is requested, and we are working with industry to ensure this picture only improves.

The Government continues to challenge industry on the use of the EWS1 process. We have requested data from industry so that we can understand how the RICS guidance is being applied, and the implications of the process for mortgage applications.

■ Housing: Planning Permission

Steve Reed: [\[7193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the number of (a) units granted planning permission on all sites in England per local authority and (b) additional net dwellings in England per local authority in every year since 2010.

Christopher Pincher:

The information in part a) is not available in the format requested. The information in part b) is publicly available on Gov.uk.

■ Private Rented Housing

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[8001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to create a fairer private rented sector.

Eddie Hughes:

As the recent Queen's Speech set out, the Government has committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market that works for both tenants and landlords

We will bring forward proposals to reform tenancy law to abolish Section 21 evictions and improve security for tenants in the private rented sector, as well as strengthening repossession grounds for landlords when they have valid grounds. Proposals for a new 'lifetime' deposit model will also be outlined, to ease the burden on tenants when moving from one tenancy to the next. We are also committed to raising standards in privately rented accommodation, and driving out rogue landlords, including by ensuring all tenants have a right to redress, and ensuring well targeted, effective enforcement that drives out criminal landlords

A White Paper detailing this reform package will be brought forward in the Autumn, informed by engagement with stakeholders across the sector to ensure our reforms deliver change that works for all.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Rachael Maskell: [\[8659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in the context of the forthcoming lifting of the ban on evictions, whether it remains Government policy that no-one should lose their home as a result of the covid-19 pandemic; and

whether the Government plans to provide financial support to private sector renters at risk of losing their homes because of covid-19 related rent arrears.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government needs to balance protecting vulnerable tenants from the ongoing risk of COVID-19 transmission with landlords' ability to exercise their right to justice where needed. Tenants continue to benefit from longer notice periods of four months in most cases, giving them more time to make alternative arrangements where needed. Whilst evictions can now proceed with 14 days' notice, they will not be carried out if a member of the home has COVID-19 symptoms or is self-isolating.

The Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support which is available to tenants to help them pay their rent. Local Housing Allowance rates were increased in April 2020 to the 30th percentile of market rents. In 2020/21 rates have been frozen in cash terms meaning claimants renting in the private rented sector will continue to benefit from the significant increase applied in April 2020. We have also made £140 million in Discretionary Housing Payments funding available, for local authorities to distribute to renters who require additional support, building on the £180 million provided in 2020/21. This is in addition to the wider support available through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Universal Credit. We continue to closely monitor the ongoing impact of the pandemic on renters.

Beth Winter:

[\[8763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many Section 21 notices have been administered in (a) Cynon Valley, (b) Rhonda Cynon Taff, (c) Wales and (d) the UK since March 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

There is no requirement on landlords to notify the Government when they serve notice of their intention to seek possession to their tenant. As such, the Department does not hold data on the number of Section 21 notices administered in Cynon Valley, Rhonda Cynon Taff, Wales or the UK.

■ **Public Works Loan Board: Housing Revenue Accounts**

Dan Carden:

[\[7929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, since the 2012 debt settlement, how much principal has been repaid to the Public Works Loans Board by all Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs); how much interest has been repaid to the Public Works Loan Board by all HRAs; and what the overall debt of all HRAs is.

Christopher Pincher:

The Public Works Loan Board provides loans to local authorities, rather than specifically to Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA). How this is attributed within the local authority, any interest incurred and repaid, is a treasury management decision taken locally by individual authorities. The Department does collect data on total housing debt as represented by the HRA Capital Financing Requirement. The closing

HRA debt for 2012-13 was £26,722,259 million, falling to £25,954,009 million by the close of 2019-20, the latest year for which we have data.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Agricultural Products: Import Duties**

Simon Hoare:

[\[7230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has carried out an economic assessment of the effect on UK farming of removing tariffs on all agricultural products on all trade deals under negotiation.

Greg Hands:

I refer my hon. Friend for North Dorset to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Harrow West on 25th May, UIN 2866.

■ **Aluminium: Antidumping Duties**

Jane Stevenson:

[\[7941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her policy is on the reintroduction of an anti-dumping surcharge on aluminium; and if she will make a statement.

Jane Stevenson:

[\[7942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the impact of introducing an anti-dumping surcharge for aluminium products on the UK's manufacturing sector.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom's policy on trade remedies, under which anti-dumping is one measure, is to protect British producers from harm caused by unfair trading practices, such as dumping, subsidies, or unforeseen surges in imports.

The Trade Remedies Authority (TRA), established on 1st June, is Britain's independent arms-length body responsible for investigating unfair trading practices or unforeseen surges in imports, based on the evidence available.

If the TRA concludes that a measure should be imposed following an investigation, it will provide an impartial and evidence-based recommendation to the Secretary of State. When a recommendation is received, the Secretary of State may only accept or reject it and cannot amend the details of the TRA's recommendation.

As part of our transition policy, we transitioned one anti-dumping measure on aluminium foil in small rolls from China, and one on certain aluminium road wheels from China. The TRA will conduct a review of the two measures in due course.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Import Duties**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[8561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of the UK's existing trade agreements do not allow for tariff-free trade in electric vehicles.

Greg Hands:

Of the 34 trade agreements that the UK has signed to date, all provide tariff-free access relating to imports on electric vehicles, except within 4 agreements: Canada, Japan, Ukraine and Viet Nam.

Electric vehicles are subject to staged annual tariff reductions with these agreements, with tariff-free imports commencing in January 2022 (Canada, Viet Nam), January 2023 (Ukraine) and February 2026 (Japan).

Tariff free trade in electric vehicles demonstrates the UK's commitment to tackling climate change and supports wider government policy to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

■ **Energy Charter**

Emily Thornberry: [\[8564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her Department's policy is on the proposed modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty.

Graham Stuart:

The UK supports the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) and will ensure that the Treaty delivers for the Government's priorities, which include tackling climate change and supporting the global clean energy transition.

The UK encourages the renegotiation of the investment protection provisions in the ECT, which seek to bring the Treaty in line with modern investment treaty practices. We also welcome the role of the ECT in ensuring consistent legal protection for UK investors operating abroad. This will allow UK companies, investing in countries that have signed the Treaty, to enjoy more protection for their assets, including those involved in renewable energy production.

Emily Thornberry: [\[8565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the impact of the Energy Charter Treaty on the UK's net-zero target.

Graham Stuart:

The UK remains committed to ensuring that the right to regulate to reach net zero is protected in all our trade agreements, including the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT).

The UK supports the work of the ECT in promoting investment in the energy sector and fostering international energy cooperation, including in the development of renewable energy worldwide.

The ECT specifically addresses environmental obligations, including calling on Member States to minimise the environmental impacts of energy operations. Member

States of the ECT are currently engaged in a process to modernise the Treaty and as the modernisation process develops, we will ensure that it delivers for the Government's priorities, which include tackling climate change and supporting the global clean energy transition.

Emily Thornberry: [\[8566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on how many occasions the Government has faced legal action through the Energy Charter Treaty.

Graham Stuart:

The UK has never faced an Investor–State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) claim under the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT).

■ **Overseas Trade: Albania**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[7983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help increase the volume of trade between the UK and Albania.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[8780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help increase the volume of trade between the UK and Kosovo.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Bilateral trade with Albania and Kosovo was worth £55 million and £15 million respectively in 2020. The Department for International Trade and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office have worked closely with Albania and Kosovo. We have negotiated and brought into effect comprehensive Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreements with both Albania and Kosovo.

■ **Overseas Trade: Australia**

Simon Hoare: [\[7229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effect of changes in the UK's trading relationships with Australia's main export markets on the potential volume of exports to the UK under a tariff-free trade agreement between the UK and Australia.

Greg Hands:

The scoping assessment for a UK-Australia agreement, published back in June 2020, assessed the potential impact on Australian exports to the UK under an illustrative scenario of a tariff-free trade agreement between the UK and Australia. It does not include an assessment of the effects of changes to the UK's trading relationship with Australia's main export markets.

Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment will be published prior to implementation.

■ Overseas Trade: Jordan**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[7979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help increase the volume of trade between the UK and Jordan.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom and Jordan have a long-standing trade relationship, with current bilateral trade reaching £606 million in 2020. My Department has secured an Association Agreement, which contributes to increasing trade by reducing tariff barriers and identifying trade opportunities for both British and Jordanian businesses.

■ Overseas Trade: Lebanon**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[8782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to increase the volume of trade between the UK and Lebanon.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom and Lebanon have a long-standing trade relationship, with current bilateral trade reaching £560 million in 2020. An Association Agreement between us came into force on 1st January 2021 and contributes to increasing trade by reducing tariff barriers and identifying trade opportunities for both British and Lebanese businesses.

■ Riot Control Weapons: Oman**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[7949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department plans to continue to license the sale of tear gas to Oman in light of the recent use for internal repression in Sohar.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and will continue to assess all export licences in accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria'). HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

■ Trade Agreements**Ms Nusrat Ghani:** [\[8649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 5209 on Trade Agreements, if the Government will make it its policy to refuse to negotiate trade agreements with any country that has sanctioned hon. Members of the UK Parliament.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave her to the same question on 26th May 2021 (UIN: 5209).

■ Trade Agreements: Kuwait

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[7974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of securing a bilateral trade agreement with Kuwait.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Britain has strong bilateral trading relationships with our friends in the Gulf and a clear ambition to deepen them. The Gulf is already one of our largest export destinations, with trade of over £30 billion in 2020, but there are many sectors in which we can collaborate further.

We are currently conducting a Joint Trade and Investment Review with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Upon completion of the review shortly, we will look to deliver on its recommendations, as we continue to broaden and deepen our trade and investment relationships with countries in the Gulf.

■ Trade Agreements: Nepal

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[7971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of securing a bilateral trade agreement with Nepal.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[7972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of securing a bilateral trade agreement with Bhutan.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[7975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of securing a bilateral trade agreement with Republic of Maldives.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has set an ambitious programme of work through our independent trade policy. British bilateral trade with the Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan respectively sits at £144m, £93m and £2m currently.

HM Government has set out that the Indo-Pacific is a priority, which includes the Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan. We are keen to boost bilateral trade in the region and are currently exploring options to deliver on this.

JUSTICE**■ Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020****Jane Stevenson:****[7278]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress he has made on implementing the provisions of the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The Act provides for the biggest reform of divorce law in fifty years and will reduce conflict between couples legally ending a marriage or civil partnership. At Commons Third Reading of the Bill the Lord Chancellor explained the need to allow time for careful implementation and that, at that early stage, the Government was working towards an indicative timetable of autumn 2021. This was an ambitious timetable.

Following Royal Assent on 25 June 2020, the Ministry of Justice has worked closely with the Family Procedure Rule Committee to identify the significant changes needed to Family Procedure Rules and supporting practice directions, and to devise some key new procedures. Those procedural changes are critical as they will shape amendments to family court forms, the online digital divorce service, and information on gov.uk. The Family Procedure Rule Committee has now consulted on draft rule amendments and is working to finalise these rules post consultation.

In parallel, officials have begun work to identify, design and build the necessary amendments to court forms and, importantly, amend the new online digital divorce service while the procedural rules themselves are being finalised. This work includes consideration of commitments made during the passage of the Act through parliament to improve the information and signposting for couples when they navigate the legal process of divorce, dissolution or separation.

The Ministry of Justice is committed to ensuring that the amended digital service allows for a smooth transition from the existing service which has reformed the way divorce is administered in the courts and improved the service received by divorcing couples at a traumatic point in their lives. Following detailed design work, it is now clear that these amendments, along with the full and rigorous testing of the new system ahead of implementation, will not conclude before the end of the year.

The Government recognises the need for clarity on when these important reforms will come into force. This will now be on the common commencement date of 6 April 2022. While this delay is unfortunate it is essential that we take the time to get this right. The new divorce process will work to reduce conflict, which is especially damaging for children, and will reflect work the Government are undertaking through the Reducing Parental Conflict programme. That programme will build the evidence on what works to reduce harmful levels of parental conflict below the threshold of domestic abuse, working with local areas to help them embed support in their local services for families. We will also use this opportunity to strengthen signposting to

family mediation as a means to resolve arrangements for children and the division of assets on divorce.

■ Family Courts: Custody

Robert Halfon: [\[7148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the presumption of contact at the Family Court does not result in unsafe contact arrangements.

Chris Philp:

Section 1 of the Children's Act 1989 sets out that the welfare of the child is the court's paramount concern. This is the fundamental principle that guides any decision made by a court regarding the future arrangements of children.

The presumption of parental contact requires courts to presume that the involvement of both parents will further the child's welfare; because it is a presumption, it applies unless the contrary is shown. This means that the presumption only applies if the parent's involvement in the child's life does not put the child at risk of suffering harm. If the court considers that the parent's involvement does put the child at risk of harm, the presumption does not apply.

The Government is currently conducting a review into the presumption of parental involvement in child arrangement cases. Launched in November 2020, this review focuses on understanding how the presumption is applied where there is an allegation, or evidence to suggest, that parental involvement will put the child at risk of harm. Conclusions from the review will be announced in due course.

■ Family Courts: Disclosure of Information

Robert Halfon: [\[7149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve transparency in the Family Court process.

Chris Philp:

Ensuring that decisions made in family proceedings are open and transparent to the public is something to which this Government has given careful consideration. We recognise that there is a delicate balance to be struck between ensuring that family proceedings are open and transparent to ensure adequate public scrutiny and the principle of public justice, whilst also ensuring that we protect the privacy of vulnerable children and families who are party to such proceedings.

This Government has taken several steps to increase transparency in family proceedings where appropriate. This has included continuing to support a pilot which allows accredited representatives of media outlets to have access to proceedings. The pilot allows legal bloggers access to proceedings with permission of the presiding judge. It also allows the blogger to write about their experiences at court but requires that names and personal information are kept anonymous.

We have also allowed the livestreaming of Court of Appeal family proceedings. This became a permanent arrangement in June 2020 through the Live Streaming Court of Appeal SI 2020 and allows anyone to view a Court of Appeal family case on the internet (again, whilst protecting the anonymity of the parties involved).

Further recommendations for increasing transparency will be carefully considered to ensure that the children and families who use the family courts continue to be protected, whilst also ensuring adequate scrutiny is given to the family courts.

■ **Foston Hall Prison: Pregnancy**

Margaret Beckett:

[7731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women were known to be pregnant while (a) on remand or (b) serving a sentence in HMP Foston Hall set out by ethnicity in each quarter from 31 March 2015 to 30 September 2020.

Alex Chalk:

We do not currently publish pregnancy data routinely.

As part of our fundamental review of policy relating to mothers and expectant mothers in prison, we have committed to providing national pregnancy data in future.

Further information on the review, including our findings and resulting reforms regarding data collection, can be found in our summary report published in July 2020: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905559/summary-report-of-review-of-policy-on-mbu.pdf

■ **KRW Law and Madden and Finucane: Legal Aid Scheme**

Johnny Mercer:

[7879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much legal aid has been allocated to Northern Ireland law firms (a) KRW Law and (b) Madden and Finucane in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

KRW Law were offered a legal aid contract which allowed them to represent families of the victims at the inquest into the Birmingham Pub Bombings. Our thoughts are with the families of those who died during this horrific attack.

Legal aid is available for inquests in exceptional cases, which is why we funded the families throughout this inquest.

While our review of legal aid showed that legal representation is not necessary for the vast majority of inquests, we are making a number of changes to ensure there is more support for bereaved families.

Payments by the Legal Aid Agency to KRW Law during the last five years are broken down as below. Note that legal aid costs are paid in arrears, therefore payments may be made in a different year to that in which services were provided:

YEAR	AMOUNT
2021	£62,892.84
2020	£91,622.03
2019	Nil
2018	Nil
2017	Nil

No legal aid has been allocated to Madden and Finucane in any of the last five years.

■ Legal Profession: North East

Mr Nicholas Brown: [8554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on law firms based in the North East of the disparity in arrangements for recovering legal costs compared with law firms headquartered in London.

Chris Philp:

In England and Wales, the general position as to recovery of legal costs in civil litigation is that the losing party pays the costs of the winning party. If these costs are not agreed, then they are assessed on principles and bases set out in the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR), which apply equally across England and Wales.

Under CPR 44.4, the place where the work was done is one of the factors to be taken into account by the court in deciding the amount of costs.

Guideline Hourly Rates (GHR), published by the Master of the Rolls, provide a starting point for the summary assessment of costs, based on the experience and the location of the lawyer undertaking the work.

In January 2021, the Civil Justice Council (CJC), chaired by the Master of the Rolls, issued a draft report for consultation on proposed revisions to the GHR:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210108-GHR-Report-for-consultation-FINAL.pdf>. The consultation closed on 31 March 2021.

■ Offences against Children: Prison Sentences

Dr Rupa Huq: [7889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to increase the maximum sentence for child cruelty to life imprisonment.

Chris Philp:

The Government keeps the maximum penalties for child cruelty offences under review and will act to increase them if there is evidence that the courts are constrained by their existing sentencing powers.

■ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[8690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent (a) discussions and (b) consultations officials in his Department have held with representatives from the Welsh Government on the development of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[8691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions have officials in his Department met or spoken to representatives from the Welsh Government to (a) discuss and (b) consult on the development and effect of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill in Wales.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[8692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the Welsh Government requiring his Department to consider the interests and responsibilities of the Welsh Government when designing and implementing UK justice policy, what steps his Department took to take into account that Memorandum of Understanding during the development and implementation of the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Chris Philp:

The Government routinely engages with officials and members of the Welsh Government where proposed legislation applies to Wales. I have written to the Minister for Social Justice on several occasions, detailing the effect of the Bill in Wales. A full assessment of the impacts of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill can be found here - <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2839/publications>. The Ministry of Justice and the Welsh Government work closely on the delivery of services where there is an overlap of reserved and devolved matters.

■ Prosecutions

Alex Cunningham: [\[7818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were prosecuted under the single justice procedure in each month of 2020 and 2021 by type of offence; and what the plea rates were for offences charged under the single justice procedure in each of those months.

Chris Philp:

Data showing the number of defendants dealt with via single justice procedures (SJP) notices at the magistrates' courts by plea and offence in England and Wales from January – December 2020 (latest available) can be found in the attached table.

The data supplied is a subset of published information relating to the timeliness of defendants dealt with by SJP notice which is available in Table 1 of the Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly, latest to December 2020.

Attachments:

1. Table 1 [PQ 7818 (final).xlsx]

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings**Liz Saville Roberts:****[7235]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) reported cases, (b) prosecutions and (c) convictions of rape there have been in Wales since March 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for rape offences in England and Wales, up to December 2020, available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool.

This can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987731/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020.xlsx

In the data tool linked above, type 'rape' into the 'Offence' filter and select all results that appear (19C-19H).

In order to isolate defendants dealt with in Wales, use the 'Police Force Area' filter to deselect all options except Gwent, Dyfed-Powys, North Wales and South Wales. In order to isolate defendants dealt with since the end of March 2020, deselect all years except 2020, then drag the 'Quarter' variable into the 'Columns' field of the pivot tool. Q2-Q4 shows figures for April to the end of December 2020.

Information on 'reported cases' is not centrally held within the Ministry of Justice Court Proceedings database.

■ Sexual Offences: Criminal Proceedings**Rachael Maskell:****[7216]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to enable survivors of rape or sexual assault to provide pre-trial evidence and cross examination due to delays in court cases.

Rachael Maskell:**[7217]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to expedite rape and sexual violence cases so that no survivor waits more than six months for their case to be heard in court.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is carrying out an end-to end review of how the Criminal Justice System responds to rape, including considering how to ensure victims are properly supported throughout the process and ensure timely progression of cases.

We intend to publish this review shortly, now that Parliament has returned from recess, but in the time since it commenced in 2019 we have already taken a range of actions to ensure that victims and witnesses receive the support they need. This

includes the roll out of Section 28 which enables victims to pre-record their cross-examination earlier in the process. This was completed at pace in Crown Courts for all vulnerable victims and is currently being piloted for victims of sexual offence and modern slavery in three Crown Courts. This pilot will inform the next steps for further roll out.

Our Crown Courts currently list thousands of cases each week and whilst listing remains a judicial function, the courts continue to prioritise hearings that are the most serious, including those involving vulnerable victims.

We are acutely aware of the impact of delays on victims and vulnerable witnesses and have already taken decisive action to address how quickly cases can be heard in the courts. We spent over a quarter of a billion pounds on recovery last financial year, making court buildings safe, rolling out new technology for remote hearings, recruiting an additional 1,600 HMCTS staff and opening 60 Nightingale courtrooms. We will continue to address the outstanding caseload and reduce delays by increasing capacity in our physical estate, running Crown Courts to the fullest possible extent, using every judge and courtroom to maximise court sitting days.

These measures, alongside those that will be outlined in the government's upcoming action plan on rape will improve victims' experiences by driving change in how the criminal justice system responds to cases of rape. This, combined with updated and stronger case preparation methods as well as increased communication between all those involved in the prosecution, should lead to more cases reaching, and progressing through, court and, we hope, defendants pleading guilty.

■ **Television Licences: Non-payment**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[8543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prosecutions and (b) convictions there were for the non-payment of TV licence fees (i) in total and (ii) of women in 2020.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[8545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department handed down in fines to people sentenced for TV Licence fee non-payment in each year since 2012.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[8548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many committal orders were made by Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales against women for default of payment of fines (a) in total and (b) in relation to a conviction for the non-payment of (i) a TV licence fee fine and (ii) council tax in 2020.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[8550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in how many prosecutions for TV Licence fee non-payment charges were withdrawn (a) after a Single Justice Procedure was sent to the defendant and (b) after a plea was entered by the defendant.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published the number of prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes (including fine amounts) for the non-payment of TV licence fees up to December 2020, available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987715/outcomes-by-offence-2020.xlsx

- Select '191A Television licence evasion' in the Offence filter; prosecutions can be found in row 23 and convictions are in row 24.
- To see these figures for females, select '02: Female' in the Sex filter.
- The number of fines issued each year can be found in row 28, and the average fine amount in row 78.

Number of charges withdrawn can be found in the Magistrates' courts data tool:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987723/magistrates-court-2020.xlsx

- Select '191A Television licence evasion' in the Offence filter; Charges withdrawn can be found in row 25.

It is not possible to distinguish at which stage the charge was withdrawn, whether the offence was dealt with under a Single Justice Procedure or information regarding plea at magistrates' court.

Centrally held Ministry of Justice court proceedings data does not record committals for default of fine payment because the offence will be recorded under contempt of court, which will not separately identify non-payment of fines. This information can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr Barry Sheerman:**[8544]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much revenue was raised from fines paid following TV licence fee non-payment convictions in each year from 2012.

Chris Philp:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr Barry Sheerman:**[8546]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much prosecutions for non-payment of the TV licence cost his Department in each year since 2012.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not held centrally.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is unable to disaggregate costs specifically related to the prosecution of non-payment of TV Licences from the overall costs of the magistrates' court.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Northern Ireland Office: Advertising****Colum Eastwood:**[\[8785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much his Department has spent on social media advertising in each month since January 2020; and on which platforms that money was money spent.

Mr Robin Walker:

Between January 2020 and June 2021, the Northern Ireland Office spent a total of £18,626 on social media advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. A monthly breakdown is detailed below.

2020	EXPENDITURE
January	n/a
February	n/a
March	n/a
April	n/a
May	n/a
June	£5,500
July	n/a
August	n/a
September	n/a
October	n/a
November	£787
December	£6,106
Total	£12,393
2021	EXPENDITURE
January	n/a
February	n/a
March	n/a

2021	EXPENDITURE
April	£340
May	£4,090
June	£1,803
Total	£6,233

Colum Eastwood: [\[8786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much his Department has spent on social media advertisements in each of the last five financial years; and on which platforms that money was spent.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Northern Ireland Office only started paid-for activity on social media platforms in 2020. Since then a total of £18,626 has been spent on social media advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Colum Eastwood: [\[8787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much his Department spent on print media advertisements in each of the last five financial years; and on which media outlets that was spent.

Mr Robin Walker:

Over the past five financial years, the Northern Ireland Office has not had any expenditure on print media advertisements.

SCOTLAND

■ Lord Advocate

Kenny MacAskill: [\[7282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what representations have been made by the Scottish Government to amend the Scotland Act 1998 in respect of the role of the Lord Advocate.

Mr Alister Jack:

As the Secretary of State for Scotland, I have responsibility for the Scotland Act and I am the custodian of the Scottish devolution settlement. The role of the Lord Advocate is protected in the Scotland Act 1998. I have not received any representations from the Scottish Government to amend it in this way.

TRANSPORT**■ Airports: Social Distancing****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[7887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that people returning from red list, amber list and green list countries during the covid-19 pandemic are able to keep apart at UK airports.

Robert Courts:

The government has issued clear guidance for both passengers and operators, with airports encouraged to introduce clear signage and one-way passenger flows where appropriate. Arrangements may vary depending on the airport and guidance is available to support operators to manage flows in a COVID-secure way.

We continue to improve processes which maintain the checks we need to carry out to keep the public safe, while minimising disruption, and passengers can support this process by ensuring they have completed the necessary requirements to enter the UK. The government continue to engage with the aviation sector to ensure they are supported in implementing best practices.

■ Aviation: Belarus**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[7255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many commercial flights (a) originating from Belarus and (b) operated by Belarusian-based airlines have entered UK airspace in the last two years.

Robert Courts:

The Department does not hold statistical data on flights entering UK airspace. Data on commercial air services collected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) only covers flights departing and arriving at UK airports and therefore does not include flights that pass-through UK airspace without landing at a UK airport.

The total number of commercial flights arriving into UK airports from Belarus was 205 in 2019, and 191 in 2020.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus**Drew Hendry:**[\[7212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the guidance entitled Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer aviation guidance for operators, what estimate his Department has made of the average number of daily flights that have implemented two meter social distancing between different households or support bubbles within aircraft where possible since the implementation of the green list travel corridors.

Robert Courts:

The Government expects all airlines to manage the risks of COVID-19 transmission. The guidance is clear that social distancing of 1m+ with risk mitigations should be

observed where possible. Where social distancing is not possible, airlines are advised to carry out a risk assessment and implement appropriate risk controls. For example, wearing a face covering can play a role in helping us to protect each other.

■ Aviation: India

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[7122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he made underpinning the decision to allow flights from India to land at UK airports after India was put on the covid-19 red list.

Robert Courts:

Since direct flight bans were first introduced in November 2020, England has introduced one of the world's most stringent systems for testing and quarantining for arrivals from high-risk countries.

Alongside the requirements to take a pre-departure test and complete the Passenger Locator Form, most people who are allowed to enter 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.

Direct flight bans were not introduced for countries added to the 'Red List' on 9 and 23 April, which had regular scheduled services to England (Pakistan, Bangladesh and India), on a trial basis. Passengers on direct flights were still subject to measures such as quarantine in a government-approved managed quarantine hotel.

We continually assess the data to understand the efficacy of measures such as managed hotel quarantine, entry bans and testing to ensure public health is protected.

■ Hitachi Rail: Redundancy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[7905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 4674, for what reason there is provision in the contract for trains operating on London North Eastern Railway for the operator to engage with Hitachi in relation to potential redundancies; when that provision was agreed; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that matter on value for money.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

When the InterCity Express Trains were introduced on the East Coast line, daily train maintenance responsibilities passed from the train operator to Hitachi.

As part of that transfer, staff previously engaged in train maintenance underwent Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) into Hitachi, but the contract allowed for Hitachi to review how it managed its maintenance teams and had provision for Hitachi to restructure if necessary. To mitigate any uncertainties around the impact of any changes being reflected in additional unknown costs to Hitachi, (which would have resulted in a risk premium from Hitachi), the Department agreed

that some of the costs in restructuring would be funded by London North Eastern Railway, in its role as the previous employer.

From a Value for Money perspective, these were unknown costs at the time of the contract award, and therefore the decision was made (in part for Value for Money, which was considered at an overall contract level) that it is better that these costs be priced as / when / if they occur, rather than priced seven plus years ahead by Hitachi.

■ **Joint Maritime Security Centre**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[8616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May to Question 258 on Joint Maritime Security Centre; what the financial contributions are of (a) his Department, (b) the Ministry of Defence and (c) the Home Office; which other Departments contribute financially; what the financial contribution is of those other Departments; and which Department has lead responsibility.

Robert Courts:

In 2020/21, the Joint Maritime Security Centre received £16m funding for its ongoing operations and investment in maritime security capability specific to the end of the Transition Period. This funding was contributed by the Department for Transport, Home Office, Ministry of Defence, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and their agencies. JMSC is governed by cross-Whitehall structures comprising the funding departments, as well as ongoing Ministerial oversight including via the Maritime Security Ministerial Small Group.

■ **Leamside Railway Line: Environmental Impact Assessment**

Bridget Phillipson: [\[7798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has undertaken an environmental impact assessment of opening a proposed Leamside South line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department received a bid for funding to develop proposals to reinstate the Leamside Line (South of Tyne and Wearside) in the first round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund. The bid was not successful at that stage and feedback was provided on how it could be improved.

The third round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund closed on 5 March and a revised bid was received, which is currently undergoing assessment. We expect to announce outcomes in the Summer.

At this stage it is solely for the promoters of any bid to determine the scope of the assessments that would be carried out should they be successful.

■ Motorways: Accidents

Jim McMahon:

[\[7237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what comparative data his Department holds on (a) deaths on the hard shoulder of existing motorways and (b) deaths on the lane that was previously a hard shoulder which is now used as a live running lane.

Rachel Maclean:

The STATS19 reporting system provides data on fatalities from road traffic accidents in Great Britain. Other than accidents which occur on a hard shoulder, STATS19 does not provide accurate and specific lane data information to be able to make this comparison.

The Secretary of State has asked the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to examine the evidence base for the relative safety of All Lane Running (ALR) motorways. That work will include looking at whether there any other data that could be used to enhance our understanding of the relative safety of ALR motorways.

■ Motorways: Road Signs and Markings

Sarah Champion:

[\[7830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on how many occasions gantry notification systems on smart motorways were inoperable as a result of technical failure in the last 12 months.

Rachel Maclean:

Highways England currently holds data to reflect the percentage of time that roadside technology is operable rather than the number of occasions that a device is offline.

Highways England assesses that, using the time period of April 1st, 2020 through to March 31st, 2021, that all of the relevant technology for Smart Motorways are operable for 99.38% of the time nationally, whilst, this operable figure for the Yorkshire North East region is 99.41% of the time.

There are maintenance standards to do with the service restoration time for the various devices associated with roadside technology (including those associated with smart motorways) that work to ensure the operability is maintained. There are factors such as accessing the roadside in a safe manner, that could impact restoration times.

■ Network Rail: Finance

Jim McMahon:

[\[8693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the total rail enhancement funding available to Network Rail for Control Period 6 is; what the actual spend is in years (a) one and (b) two; and what the forecast total spend is for years (i) three, (ii) four and (iii) five.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The budget for Rail Enhancements for England and Wales during Control Period 6 (CP6, 2019/20-23/24) is £9.4 Billion.

The actual spend in years requested was:

(a) one (2019/20) = £1,475 Million

(b) two (2020/21) = £1,477 Million

The latest forecast spend (Network Rail Period 1, 2021/22) for years requested is:

(i) Three (2021/22) = £1,952 Million

(ii) Four (2022/23) = £2,185 Million

(iii) Five (2023/24) = £2,320 Million

■ Northwich Station: Repairs and Maintenance

Mike Amesbury:

[\[7269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the need for investment to (a) rebuild, (b) modernise and (c) improve accessibility at Northwich Station after the collapse of part of the roof and building at that station.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

An investigation is being carried out by Northern, Network Rail and the Office of Rail and Road and this work is still ongoing.

The operator is working with Network Rail to review temporary facilities and a proposed new station building.

■ Plastics: Pollution

Sarah Olney:

[\[7895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of particulate and plastic pollution from (a) brakes, (b) tyres and (c) road wear on human health; and what steps the Government is taking to tackle that matter.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport has not conducted an assessment of the potential effect of particulate and plastic pollution from brake, tyre and road wear (collectively referred to as 'non-exhaust emissions') on human health. However, in 2020 the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) reviewed and published a statement on the existing evidence on the subject.

In February, the Department for Transport commenced a significant research project to understand better the measurement techniques, materials properties and control parameters of brake and tyre wear emissions from road vehicles. The project will report in 2023 and will be used to inform policy decisions and any potential legislation that may be required to control and reduce these emissions. The Department is also taking a leading role within the UNECE Particle Measurement Programme (PMP), which is developing an internationally recognised test procedure for measuring non-exhaust particle emissions from vehicles.

■ Public Transport: Safety

Lilian Greenwood: [\[7795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to ensure that people are aware that it is safe to use buses, trains and trams when appropriate Covid-19 safety measures are followed.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[7796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to increase the use of public transport.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[7797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to rebuild public confidence in using public transport following the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

Passengers have been advised to plan ahead and continue to follow guidance on how to travel safely. This includes sanitising their hands regularly, wearing a face covering unless exempt, opening a window to increase ventilation where possible, and maintaining social distancing where possible. We are working with operators to ensure service levels are high as restrictions ease. Operators have already enhanced their cleaning regimes at stations and on-board services and hand sanitisers are widely available at stations.

The Department has also launched the 'It's everyone's journey' campaign to reset travel behaviours and support disabled people to return to the transport network. The Department is working closely with operators to improve busyness data and on industry communication campaigns to build public confidence in using public transport. As announced on 20 May alongside the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the Department 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.

■ Railway Stations: Visual Impairment

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[7104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that train stations in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey are fully equipped with tactile paving along platform edges.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I have asked Network Rail to develop a programme to aim to install platform edge tactile strips on every platform in Great Britain.

I will make a further announcement in due course.

■ Railways: Greater London**Sir David Evennett:** [\[7746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve rail services in south-east London.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Several projects to improve rail services are currently ongoing or are in development across south-east London including schemes of work at Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye and Lewisham station, which will improve the experience of passengers.

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance**Jim McMahon:** [\[8694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish an updated Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We will publish an update to the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline in the coming months.

■ Railways: Risk Assessment**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[7243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason Network Rail continues to operate without use of the Office of Rail and Road's risk management assessment tool as introduced to rail industry in 2011; whether the alternative service it receives from third party companies provides Network Rail with industry specific advice; and how much that alternative service costs Network Rail on average per year.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail does use the Office of Rail and Road's risk management assessment tool, RM3. Network Rail is currently incorporating the tool into its existing systems and is rolling it out across its regions and functions.

■ Roads: Safety**Andrea Leadsom:** [\[8595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress has been made by the rural roads working group established by the hon. Member for Northampton North; and what steps are being taken to improve road safety in rural areas to reduce fatal accidents.

Rachel Maclean:

The Rural Roads Working Group was announced as part of the Road Safety Statement 2019 – 'A Lifetime of Road Safety'. The work to establish the group was well underway but then paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of the group is now being reassessed to ensure it addresses relevant matters in a post-COVID landscape.

The Department's Safer Roads Fund continues to improve road safety in rural areas. Some of the initial schemes that were funded in 2017/18 have now completed and the final allocation of £35.3m was paid to Local Authorities in March 2021.

■ **Trains: Hitachi**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[8583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 2411, since 13 May 2021, in how many instances were Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series trains found to have failings or structural defects in three or more joints.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Hitachi's Intercity Class 800 series are inspected each day. If a train shows any risk to safe operation, be it from a single, or from multiple failures, it is recorded as unfit and prevented from entering service. The regime for checking structural defects has been cleared by Hitachi, all train operators, and has been overseen by the independent Office of Rail and Road.

■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

Henry Smith: [\[8583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, by what criteria countries are assigned to the red, amber and green lists for international travel.

Henry Smith: [\[8584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the thresholds are for (a) vaccination rates and (b) infection rates when assigning countries to red, amber and green lists for international travel.

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. Risk assessments are based on factors such as the level of community transmission of variants of concern or variant under investigation, levels of testing, genomic sequencing and reporting. Details of the in-country and territory vaccination profile are included as contextual information in the assessment.

A summary of the JBC methodology has been published on GOV.UK, alongside key data that supports ministers' decisions.

Julian Sturdy: [\[8588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) including and (b) not including an amber travel list in the covid-19 traffic light system prior to the introduction of that list.

Robert Courts:

The “traffic light” country system was developed in conjunction with industry and international partners to facilitate the return of international travel.

The three categories of countries (red, amber and green), to which different restrictions are applied depending on risk, are designed to help the public to understand the health requirements when travelling to England.

TREASURY■ **Buildings: Fire Prevention****Stephen Doughty:**[\[7189\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government since the Senedd elections on (a) Barnett consequential of fire safety remediation funds announced by his Department and (b) the design and operation of new taxes and levies related to fire and building safety.

Steve Barclay:

The Welsh and UK governments regularly discuss a range of policy issues.

As part of the cladding remediation package announced by the UK Government this year the devolved administrations will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula at future fiscal events and spending reviews, except where new departmental spending is funded by an England-only levy.

■ **Economic Situation: South East****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[8707\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) Slough and (b) the South East has a secure economic foundation to meet challenges presented by the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

Since the start of the pandemic, Slough has received nearly £44 million in grant funding for local businesses. At Budget 2021, the Government announced new Restart Grants, to give businesses the cash certainty they need to plan and safely relaunch trading over the last few months. Hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business premises in England are eligible for grants up to £18,000. Non-essential retail business premises in England are eligible to receive grants worth up to £6,000.

A top-up worth a total of £425m to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund has also been provided to local authorities. This, combined with the £1.6 billion previous allocated, means local authorities will have received over £2.1bn of discretionary grant funding to support businesses which are not eligible for Restart Grants, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to public health restrictions.

Since March 2020, the Government has introduced a collection of loan guarantee schemes including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs). As of 25th March 2021, these schemes have collectively approved more than £75 billion worth of finance through more than 1.6 million facilities to support businesses of all sizes to get through the pandemic.

In the South East as of the end of January 2021, the BBLs had been offered 199,574 times totalling over £6 billion, and CBILS had been offered 11,260 times totalling over £2.8 billion.

To aid businesses and employees through the next stage of the pandemic, at Budget the Government extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for a further five months from May until the end of September 2021, when the CJRS will close. There have been a total of 1,537,300 jobs supported by the CJRS in the South East since the scheme's inception, of which 31,200 are in Slough.

Employers will continue to pay only National Insurance Contributions and pension contributions until the end of June 2021. As the economy reopens and demand returns, the Government will ask employers to make a small additional contribution, of 10 per cent towards the cost of paying for unworked hours, from July. As the economy reopens further, this employer contribution will increase to 20 per cent in August and September. This is the same approach the Government successfully introduced last summer, when the majority of employees went back to work.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will also continue until September 2021, with a fourth and fifth grant. The fourth SEISS grant will cover 80% of average trading profits. The fifth and final SEISS grant providing support in summer will include a turnover test in order to ensure that the most generous support is targeted at those who need it the most. As of the end of January 2021, there have been 1,034,000 claims for SEISS in the South East, totalling over £3 billion.

■ Equitable Life Assurance Society

Bob Blackman: [\[8586\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 April 2021 to Question 187376 on Equitable Life Assurance Society, how his Department defines relevant records in relation to the Equitable Life Payments Scheme; and whether any other records in relation to the Scheme have been previously (a) held and (b) destroyed.

Bob Blackman: [\[8587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 April 2021 to Question 187376 on Equitable Life Assurance Society, whether his Department (a) holds data relating to the Equitable Life Payments Scheme for purposes other than ongoing payments to annuitants and (b) has previously held such data.

John Glen:

As I assured the House on 27 April 2021, there has been no change in the Treasury's position. The relevant records – that is, those needed to ensure the accuracy of

ongoing payments, and to respond to queries in relation to payments that have already been made – are retained and will continue to be, as long as it is legal to do so. There are no plans to destroy records.

■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence

Mr Steve Baker: [\[7163\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of legitimate HMRC contact with the public that the public has mistakenly perceived to be fraudulent; and what estimate he has made of the cost of that mistaken perception to the public purse.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[7164\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on tackling HMRC-related impersonation fraud.

Jesse Norman:

The Chancellor is in regular contact with Cabinet colleagues, including the Home Secretary. In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of ministerial discussions are not normally disclosed.

HMRC have many hundreds of millions of contacts with the public every year. Creating clear air between genuine HMRC communications and those attempting to abuse the HMRC brand to commit fraud is a high priority for HMRC. HMRC's success in preventing the UK public being duped by fraudulent operators impersonating legitimate contact is reflected in the move from HMRC as the third most phished brand globally five years ago, to not featuring in the top 100 most phished brands today.

■ Welfare State: Reform

Beth Winter: [\[8764\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many households in (a) Cynon Valley and (b) Wales have been affected by the loss of the child element of child tax credit and universal credit for a third or later child born on or after 6 April 2017 as a result of not meeting any listed exceptions; and how much money those affected households have not been entitled to as a result of the social security changes that took place on 6 April 2017 for the tax year 2019-20.

Steve Barclay:

The government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics related to the period up to April 2020 were published in July 2020.

Table 5 shows that as at April 2020, across Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit, 11,320 households in Wales had reported a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 and were not receiving a child element/amount.

On Universal Credit there were 130 households in Cynon Valley reporting a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 and not receiving a child element/amount in April 2020. This data is for households that had an open UC claim in April 2020, and so will have been included in the 2020 publication "Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit claimants: Statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children".

Information on the number of households in Cynon Valley on tax credits reporting a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 and not receiving a child element/amount in April 2020 is not readily available.

An estimate of the total tax credits entitlement foregone as a result of the changes on 6 April 2017 is not available for 2019-20 until tax credits finalised awards data for that year has been processed, which is expected to be completed by summer 2021.

As households on Universal Credit would be affected differently by their individual circumstances, an estimate of the amount of money those affected households would not have been entitled to is not available. On average, if there were no other circumstances impacting the amount received, most households would not be entitled to the £237.08 per month child element for the third or subsequent child.

WALES

■ Regional Planning and Development: Wales

Jonathan Edwards:

[8577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what metrics the Government plans to use to measure success on the commitment to levelling up in the recently published Plan for Wales.

Simon Hart:

Levelling up is at the heart of the Government's agenda and the commitments in the Plan for Wales to build back better and drive jobs, growth and prosperity. This includes making £27 billion available through the Levelling Up Fund, UK Community Renewal Fund and UK infrastructure Bank as well as investment in critical broadband, mobile and transport connectivity.

At Spending Review 2020, all Departments agreed provisional priority outcomes across all of the UK, along with metrics for measuring progress against these outcomes. The full list can be found [here](#) :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2020-documents>.

The Government will be looking at additional mechanisms for measuring progress on its levelling up ambitions as part of the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper.

■ Trade Agreements: Wales**Jonathan Edwards:****[8578]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Trade and Investment Hub on producing economic impact assessments of trade deals proposed by the UK Government.

Simon Hart:

I work closely with my colleagues in the Department for International Trade to ensure that businesses and consumers across Wales feel the benefits of our world-class Free Trade Agreements and take advantage of new opportunities as we unlock access to new markets. The Government carried out preliminary scoping assessments for each FTA negotiation with a full impact assessment published prior to implementation.

The Trade and Investment Hubs are central to promoting British exports from all parts of the UK, to help level up the country and build back better. The hub in Cardiff will be home to export and investment specialists who will provide businesses with expert support and advice to maximise export potential, boost trade in new markets overseas, and help businesses feed directly into the free trade agreements programme.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Hywel Williams:****[8556]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the High Court's ruling in January 2021, what steps her Department is taking to amend or remove the proof of payment mechanism for assessing and paying the childcare costs element of universal credit.

Will Quince:

The Department has been granted permission to appeal. It is therefore not appropriate to comment at this time. It should be noted there are no changes to the current processes and the legislation remains the same.

The policy of reimbursing actual childcare costs paid has, as intended, resulted in a significantly lower level of fraud and error than in the legacy system, which was based on projected costs.

Eligible claimants can claim up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month compared to 70% in legacy benefits.

■ Children: Poverty**Ronnie Cowan:** [7209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the £20 uplift in universal credit on levels of child poverty in (a) Scotland and (b) Inverclyde constituency.

Peter Grant: [7211]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the £20 uplift in universal credit on levels of child poverty in (a) Scotland and (b) Glenrothes constituency.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help people move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of 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.

Peter Grant: [7210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the levels of child poverty in (a) Scotland and (b) Glenrothes 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.

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

Latest statistics for the levels of children who are in low income in Scotland, 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 Scotland was 17%, down 2 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 Glenrothes and in Scotland, 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

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Self-employed

Jonathan Reynolds: **[8596]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the risk of bogus self employment among its external providers.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has robust controls in place to ensure taxpayers' money is protected. All job outcome payments to contracted employment providers, including self-employment, are subject to a strict validation and assurance regime to ensure that they are legitimate.

■ Disability: Public Consultation

Caroline Lucas: **[7784]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to Answer of 17 May to Question 314 on Disability: Public Consultation, if she will (a) specify in which month she plans to publish the Green Paper, and (b) set out the mechanisms by which she is continuing engagement with disabled people and their representatives; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

Given the necessary focus on the departmental response to Covid-19, we are working to a longer timescale than previously anticipated. There is no set date for publication but we plan to publish in the coming months.

The content of the Green Paper will be strongly influenced by the views of disabled people and their representatives. Over the last 12 months I have led a series of virtual events, organised with national charities, where I heard directly from disabled people about their experiences with the benefits system.

In February I wrote to all Members of Parliament to offer a virtual event with disabled people, charities and organisations in their constituency. We have held ten of these events so far and they will continue in the run up to the publication of the Green Paper and during the consultation period.

■ Jobcentres: Coronavirus**David Linden:** [\[7256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of work coaches who have received their (a) first dose and (b) second dose of the covid-19 vaccine.

Mims Davies:

The Department encourages and supports its staff, including Work Coaches, to get vaccinated against COVID-19. We do not, however, record the number of staff who have been vaccinated.

Anne McLaughlin: [\[8648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the risk assessments undertaken by her Department in respect of the return to face-to-face appointments in job centres for 18 to 24 year olds.

Mims Davies:

DWP takes the safety of colleagues and customers very seriously and all of our offices are COVID secure. We have a suite of Health & Safety risk assessments in place developed following extensive consultation with departmental trade union representatives. These are not specific to any customer group but relate to the safety of everyone who uses a jobcentre and are regularly reviewed, including when services are extended.

These risk assessments cover all of the measures in place to protect staff and publishing them could potentially identify the physical security measures on site, for example, CCTV coverage and therefore put our staff and customers at risk.

Chris Stephens: [\[8650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what comparative assessment she has made of the effectiveness of a return to face-to-face appointments for groups of claimants in job centres and other channels including telephone and digital that were introduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

No comparative assessment of face-to-face appointments for groups of claimants in jobcentres and other channels has currently been made.

The return to a face-to-face regime is based on evidence from past large scale trials of what interventions work best for out of work benefits claimants. These show that face-to-face performs better than telephony and that seeing a claimant fortnightly produces substantially better outcomes than not seeing claimants at all.

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130314010347/http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrs-index.asp> (report 382)

Chris Stephens: [\[8651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of claimants attending face-to-face appointments in job centres by region since the easing of covid-19 restrictions was applied to those centres in late April 2021.

Mims Davies:

Throughout the pandemic, Jobcentres remained open for anyone who needed face-to-face support. From April, all Jobcentres in England, Scotland and Wales returned to their pre-lockdown opening hours and restarted face-to-face appointments, in accordance with government guidelines. As of w/c 24 May we estimate that 273,318 claimants have attended booked face-to-face appointments in England, 20,997 in Scotland and 15,877 in Wales.

Please note that the data supplied is derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. The data should therefore be treated with caution.

■ **Jobcentres: Opening Hours**

Patrick Grady: [\[8647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many job centres and temporary job centres are currently opening on Sundays; and what discussions her Department has had with staff representatives on Sunday opening.

Mims Davies:

Jobcentres are open Monday to Friday, including Saturdays where this has been agreed. We do not open our Jobcentres on a Sunday, other than in exceptional circumstances to respond to local needs. We have not had any conversations with our Departmental Trade Unions about opening on Sundays.

■ **Kickstart Scheme**

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[7738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs have been (a) approved and (b) commenced under the Kickstart scheme in (a) England, (b) the North East and (c) Newcastle East constituency.

Mims Davies:

We are unable at present to provide data on the number of approved jobs by region, as at that stage in the process we do not hold information about the exact location of a job, only the head office of the employer.

For the most recently released information about the number of Kickstart jobs commenced by region I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [546](#).

Delivering the Kickstart Scheme at pace has led to a limited data set which makes it harder to accurately present a snapshot of a smaller geographical area. We are

continuing to develop our data, which may help in sharing constituency level information in due course

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[7739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time is between a job being approved through the government's Kickstart scheme and the placement beginning in (a) England, (b) the North East and (c) Newcastle East constituency in the latest period for which that data is available.

Mims Davies:

When applying for funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme, employers are able to choose when the funded jobs start in the life of the scheme. This means that the time between approval and start can vary greatly and will greatly affect any averages. A number of processes must be completed before a job can be started including the signing of a grant funding agreement and the referring of an eligible young person.

The average time between a job being made available for a young person to apply for and a young person starting in that position is less than 28 days. This is based on all jobs made available for young people to apply to since the Kickstart Scheme launched until the 20th May. This figure is the national average; we are currently unable to break this information down to the regional level or below.

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.

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[7740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will provide an estimate of the number of placements on the Kickstart scheme that will result in permanent employment in (a) England, (b) the North East and (c) Newcastle East constituency.

Mims Davies:

The aim of the Kickstart Scheme is to fund the direct creation of additional jobs for young people at risk of long-term unemployment. Kickstart provides young people with an opportunity to build their skills and confidence in the work place and gain experience that will improve their chances of finding long-term, sustainable work. No estimates have been made.

Alison Thewliss: [\[8642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [2273](#).

Alison Thewliss:**[8643]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have secured employment through the Kickstart scheme to date.

Mims Davies:

The aim of the Kickstart Scheme is to fund the direct creation of additional jobs for young people at risk of long-term unemployment. Kickstart provides young people with an opportunity to build their skills and confidence in the work place and gain experience that will improve their chances of finding long-term, sustainable work.

As of the 27 May 2021, over 29,000 young people have started jobs created by the Kickstart Scheme.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Equality**Alison Thewliss:****[8644]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the equality impact assessment relating to the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions plans to publish the Equality Impact Assessment on the Kickstart Scheme in due course.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Glasgow**Alison Thewliss:****[8645]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employers in Glasgow Central constituency have been signed up to the Kickstart scheme as at 27 May 2021.

Alison Thewliss:**[8646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many young people in Glasgow Central have (a) been offered and (b) begun a place under the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Delivering the Kickstart Scheme at pace has meant an initial concentration on the production of a limited data set. We are continuing to develop our data, and we aim to

be able to publish more localised data (including by Parliamentary constituency) in due course.

■ **Kickstart Scheme: Hertfordshire**

Daisy Cooper: [\[8742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Kickstart applications waiting for a decision for eight weeks or more after submission as at 27 May 2021 were from organisations based in Hertfordshire.

Mims Davies:

Delivering the Kickstart Scheme at pace has led to a limited data set which makes it hard to present an accurate snapshot of a smaller geographical area, meaning we are currently unable to provide information at a county wide level. We are continuing to develop our data, which may help in sharing this level of information in due course.

Since the launch of the Kickstart Scheme we have made changes to the assessment process to enable a quicker turnaround of applications, whilst ensuring that we continue to protect taxpayer's money through robust and fair procedures. Data from 27 May shows that over the previous 7 days, the average number of days from application receipt to grant agreement issued is less than 20 days.

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 program.

■ **Pensions Regulator: Universities Superannuation Scheme**

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[7845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to establish an inquiry into the (a) governance of and (b) role of the Pensions Regulator in the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

Guy Opperman:

No. The Pensions Regulator was created in 2004 by the then Labour Government to be independent.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disability**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[7888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the timetable is for publication of her Department's Health and Disability Green Paper.

Justin Tomlinson:

Given the necessary focus on the departmental response to Covid-19, we are working to a longer timescale than previously anticipated. We continue to engage with disabled people and their representatives and plan to publish the formal consultation document in the coming months.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**Chris Stephens:****[8652]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of claimants who failed to attend a face-to-face appointment in a jobcentre since the extended openings began in late April 2021 have since been referred to decision makers for sanction.

Mims Davies:

Monthly sanction referral statistics for those people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group), Income Support and Universal Credit (Live Service) are available by referral reason and are published quarterly at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The latest statistics are available to January 2021, with the statistics to April 2021 and July 2021 expected to be published in August 2021 and November 2021 respectively.

Sanction referral statistics for those people claiming Universal Credit (Full Service) are not readily available and to provide them would incur disproportionate cost.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females**Jonathan Reynolds:****[7171]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, by what date her Department plans to complete settling outstanding underpayments of married women's state pension.

Guy Opperman:

Written statements about the State Pension Correction Exercise were provided to both houses on 4 March 2021 and 21 April 2021. The statement of 21 April 2021 explained that The Department for Work & Pensions aims to complete the correction activity by the end of 2023.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-03-04/debates/21030423000012/StatePensionCorrectionExercise>

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-04-21/debates/21042129000008/StatePensionUnderpayments>

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[7172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many married women have made claims to claim the underpayment of their state pension to date.

Guy Opperman:

Written statements about the State Pension Correction Exercise were provided to both houses on 4 March 2021 and 21 April 2021. The Department for Work & Pensions intends to publish further information on the progress of the State Pension correction activity around the time of the next fiscal event.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-03-04/debates/21030423000012/StatePensionCorrectionExercise>

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-04-21/debates/21042129000008/StatePensionUnderpayments>

■ Support for Mortgage Interest**Dr Philippa Whitford:** [\[7837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of switching to Support for Mortgage Interest rather than housing support for homeowners with a mortgage in receipt of universal credit.

Guy Opperman:

No assessment has been made of the potential merits of switching to Support for Mortgage Interest rather than housing support for homeowners with a mortgage in receipt of universal credit.

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[7838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the waiting time before new universal credit claimants are eligible for Support for Mortgage Interest on (a) debt levels and (b) mortgage defaults.

Guy Opperman:

No assessment has been made on the effect of the waiting time of debt levels and mortgage defaults for new UC claimants.

■ Universal Credit**Mary Kelly Foy:** [\[7943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the equity of her policy on two persons who qualify for the Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity element of Universal Credit make a joint claim, one of them loses the Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity element; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

It is right that where there has been a change in circumstances, such as a couple forming, benefit entitlement is reassessed to reflect the altered financial status of the household. In Universal Credit, while both members of a couple may be assessed as

having limited capability for work and work-related activity, only one limited capability for work and work-related activity element can be awarded. In income-related ESA, whilst a couple's rate of personal allowance can be paid, only the claimant is assessed and if found to have limited capability for work and work-related activity, awarded the equivalent Support Group component. There is no couple rate of the Support Group component.

The limited capability for work and work-related activity element is designed to reflect the extra costs of longer durations on benefit. Income from benefits such as Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance, which are provided to meet additional costs relating to disability for individuals rather than households, is not taken into account.

■ Universal Credit: Debts

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[7123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2925, whether his Department has made an assessment on how an urgent universal credit payment in the form of a loan affects (a) people who are already in debt and (b) domestic violence survivors who are often already in debt due to economic coercion by their abuser.

Will Quince:

Advances are not loans. They are a claimant's benefit entitlement paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. With an advance, claimants receive an additional UC payment, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period. We have 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.

Where a partner in a joint benefit claim is being financially impacted as a result of coercive control, it may be possible to arrange for payments on a joint claim to be split between two parties. If a Universal Credit claimant has been forced into claiming an advance through domestic abuse, we would urge the claimant to talk to the Department about this.

A range of other support is available across the Department for those impacted by domestic abuse.

■ Universal Credit: Domestic Abuse

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[7124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2925 on Universal Credit: Domestic Abuse, whether her Department has made an assessment of the ease of access to information that universal credit claimants can request an urgent payment as a loan.

Will Quince:

Advances are not loans. They are a claimant's benefit entitlement paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. With an advance, claimants receive an additional UC payment, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

Universal Credit Work Coaches advise claimants on access to advances of monies from Universal Credit to support them pending their Universal Credit payment being received. A range of other support is available across the Department for those impacted by domestic abuse.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[7125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the problem of claimants of universal credit (a) having their application for that benefit delayed and (b) being unable to make that claim as a result of their abusers withholding required documentation.

Will Quince:

Jobcentres have staff trained to support victims of abuse and can direct them to specialist organisations who can offer further support.

Claimants who are unable to provide documentary evidence can undergo a biographical test. Biographical questions are generated onto a [BIO template](#) using information held on the Customer Information System (Searchlight). This can be done by telephone or in person at a Jobcentre, and it does not cause any delay as it can be done within the first Assessment Period.

In addition, the Flexible Support Fund can be used to support the claimant obtain new ID in the form of duplicate driving licences, birth certificates etc, and can help with opening new bank accounts if necessary.

Claimants can also receive an urgent payment of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[7764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 2925 on Universal Credit: Domestic Abuse, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of turning the universal credit advance from a loan to a grant on the (a) levels of personal debt among universal credit claimants, (b) levels of personal debt among universal credit claimants who are fleeing domestic violence and (c) the cost to the public purse.

Will Quince:

Advances are not loans. They are a claimant's benefit entitlement paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. They ensure nobody has to wait for a payment in Universal Credit and those who need it are able to receive financial support as soon as possible. Claimants can receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

For (a) and (b), no such assessment has been made.

(c) We currently estimate the cost of non-repayable advances to be between £2bn - £2.7bn annually between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Even with a verification check two weeks after a claim has been made, the introduction of non-repayable advances would very likely lead to significantly increased fraud in the welfare system, as well as an administrative burden to carry out the extra verification checks.

We have numerous provisions available to support victims of abuse, for example urgent payments and referrals to expert organisations. We provide a tailored service that recognises those with complex needs at any point throughout their journey and ensures appropriate support is quickly made available: a fundamental principle in the delivery of Universal Credit

■ Work Capability Assessment

Grahame Morris:

[7143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when face-to-face work capability assessments for social security allowances will resume.

Justin Tomlinson:

Following their suspension in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from 17 May 2021 we have resumed face-to-face Work Capability Assessments for Employment and Support Allowance claimants, and for Universal Credit claimants who have reported a disability or health condition that affects their ability to work. Initially they will only be for those who we are unable to assess by other channels, and are taking place alongside existing paper-based assessments, telephone assessments and a small number of video assessments where suitable.

The Honourable Gentleman can find further information on the resumption of face-to-face assessments, including guidance for claimants and assessment providers on their safe resumption, on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Flood Control

Bill Esterson:

[\[7799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2021 to Question 4583 on Flood control, if he will publish the content of that feedback.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 June 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Rebecca Pow:

All organisations who submitted expressions of interest to the flood and coastal resilience innovation programme have been offered detailed feedback. The significant details included in the expressions of interest and the subsequent feedback are commercially confidential, meaning that it is only appropriate for this to be handled between the applicant organisations and the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency is continuing to work with all projects that did not secure funding via this programme to take their **goodproposed** ideas forward.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Publication In Draft - Downstream Oil Resilience Bill

UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency and Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS64\]](#)

I will this morning lay before Parliament a draft Downstream Oil Resilience Bill which introduces measures that will enable Government to support industry in ensuring the resilience of the fuel supply sector, prevent supply disruptions and maintain the security of fuel supply to consumers.

The sector is currently efficient, flexible and effective in ensuring the continuity of fuel supply and we do not currently expect any disruption to this. We need to ensure that we protect the continuity of fuel supply and that we are prepared and resilient to disruptions when they do occur. The measures set out in the draft Bill will help ensure that critical services and consumers will continue to receive the fuel on which they rely on and will reduce the risk of disruption to economic activities from the loss of fuel supplies.

This draft Bill follows a public consultation in 2017, where Government explored options to address sector resilience and concluded that due to high levels of global competition, the sector has gone through a process of restructuring to remain internationally competitive which has reduced their spare capacity. This means that there is an increased risk of market disruption in the downstream oil sector, given the lower capacity to react to sudden supply and demand shocks.

The fuel supply system faces a number of inherent risks, including accidents, severe weather, malicious threats, industrial action, and financial failure. The Government works with fuel suppliers to mitigate such risks and, while individual companies have a good record of managing their own risks, they do not see a commercial return in managing low probability, higher impact risks.

The publication also marks the first step towards the commitment made in the Energy White Paper 'Powering our Net Zero Future' to take powers to ensure we maintain a secure and resilient supply of fossil fuels during the transition to net zero emissions. As set out in the Energy White paper and in line with the recommendation from the independent Climate Change Committee, we will decarbonise our energy system, boosting the production of clean energy. The Sixth Carbon Budget will ensure Britain remains on track to end its contribution to climate change. Ensuring a reliable and secure fuel supply to essential services in coming years will be critical and therefore primary legislation is required to build adequate resilience across the whole supply system.

The Integrated Review 2021 sets out our goals to build a more robust position on national security and resilience in order to reduce the impact of shocks and long-term challenges on the life and livelihoods of UK citizens. The Bill is aligned with the Integrated Review's

objectives and outlines solutions to address the current and future risks to the downstream oil sector because we need to ensure that there is a supply of secure, affordable and clean energy which is essential to the UK's national interests.

The Bill will help the Government identify risks of disruption to the UK fuel supply market in advance and ensure that Government and industry together can implement effective and proportionate contingency plans as early as possible. This includes mandating the provision of information to Government to allow better risk assessment and design appropriate mitigating measures, and direction powers that will allow the Government to intervene where supply resilience is compromised, or there is a significant risk that it will be, and the industry has not taken any action. The Bill also introduces new powers that allow the Government to ensure that anyone taking control of critical infrastructure in this sector has appropriate financial and operational measures in place, and a new spending power to allow Government to provide financial assistance to support sector resilience and ensure continuity of supply, where such support is deemed necessary and value for money.

The Bill will apply to all operators and infrastructure in the Downstream Oil Sector with a supply handling capacity above the thresholds which are outlined in the Bill. My department will continue to work with industry to refine the proposed measures, so that the disruption to market functioning is minimal.

The Bill will also ensure that there is a reliable energy supply and increased resilience which means that the Downstream Oil sector is able to protect against, react to and recover from any disruption.

The draft Bill will be published with accompanying explanatory notes and an assessment of the potential impacts. The draft Bill will undergo pre-legislative scrutiny by the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee to ensure that it is robust and workable.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Eighth Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt):

[\[HCWS68\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG), has today made the following written statement:

The next meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee will take place in London on 9 June 2021, with delegations attending in person and by video conference.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG, and Vice President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič.

The agenda will include five items:

1. Welcome and opening remarks from the co-chairs
 - 1.1 Formal adoption of the agenda

1.2 Stocktake of Specialised Committee activity 24 February - [9 June] 2021

2. Withdrawal Agreement Annual Report

3. Update on Withdrawal Agreement Implementation

3.1 Citizens' Rights

3.2 Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol

4. AOB

5. Concluding remarks

The UK delegation will include:

- Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG;
- Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP.

Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive have been invited to form part of the UK delegation.

■ **First Meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council**

Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt):

[\[HCWS67\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG), has today made the following written statement:

The first meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council will take place on 9 June 2021, in person and by video conference, hosted by the UK.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG, and Vice President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič.

The agenda will include nine items:

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome, opening remarks from the co-chairs

1.2 Formal adoption of the agenda

2. Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Customs and Trade Facilitation

3. Fisheries

4. Law Enforcement

5. Long-term visa fees

6. Participation in Union Programmes

7. Update on institutional framework

7.1 Tentative timetable of meetings of Committees under the TCA

7.2 Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

7.3 Civil Society Forum

8. AOB

9. Concluding remarks

The UK delegation will include:

- Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG;
- Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP;
- Ministers from the devolved administrations.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Update on review into the regulation of BetIndex Ltd

Minister of State for Media and Data (Mr John Whittingdale):

[\[HCWS63\]](#)

Further to the statement of 20th April outlining plans for an independent expert review of the regulation of the Football Index gambling product, we are today announcing the full terms of reference for the review and further details.

The Secretary of State has appointed Malcolm Sheehan QC to lead the review. He will provide an independent expert account of the actions taken by the Gambling Commission and other relevant regulatory bodies, and consider the lessons to be learnt for the future. He will have access to all the necessary information held by government and regulatory bodies to conduct the review.

As outlined in the Terms of Reference which we have also released in full on gov.uk, the Review will cover the period from the granting of BetIndex's gambling licence in September 2015 to the Gambling Commission's suspension of that licence on 11th March this year. It will principally report on the actions of the Gambling Commission in assessing, licensing, and monitoring the operator, responding to concerns and delivering its objectives. The review will also consider how the Financial Conduct Authority responded to questions from the Gambling Commission and how it considered whether the product amounted to a regulated activity under the Financial Services and Markets Act.

It is important that former customers continue to have a voice. The administrators should have already contacted every former customer so they can submit a claim if they think they are owed money or compensation from the company. Customers will be kept informed through the administration process, including on any opportunities they may have to vote on next steps. The Gambling Commission will also continue to consider information it receives from individuals about the actions of Football Index where it pertains to its ongoing regulatory investigation into BetIndex's licence. While the Call for Evidence closed on 31 March, former customers can also continue to provide information to DCMS about the Football Index case to inform the Gambling Act Review. Hundreds of individuals have already done so, and where relevant to the Terms of Reference for the independent review we will pass those to Malcolm Sheehan QC.

This independent review is expected to provide a report for publication in the summer, and will include recommendations as needed across the full range of questions set out in the Terms of Reference. Its findings will form part of the evidence informing the government's ongoing Review of the Gambling Act 2005, which was announced in December 2020. This independent review is entirely separate from the Gambling Commission's ongoing regulatory investigation and the administration proceedings, and will be done in such a way as to avoid prejudicing either of those processes. A copy of the Terms of Reference will be placed in the Library of the House.

HOME OFFICE

■ Independent verification of the Compliance Improvement Review

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS69\]](#)

In 2019, my predecessor notified Parliament of compliance risks that MI5 had identified and reported to the Home Office and the Investigatory Powers Commissioner. These risks were identified within certain technology environments used to store and analyse data, including material obtained under the Investigatory Powers Act. The compliance risks related to the particular safeguards set out in the Investigatory Powers Act that relate to the processing of material that has been obtained under a warrant (Section 53 of the Act and the corresponding provisions).

As part of the response to this, Sir Martin Donnelly, a former Permanent Secretary, conducted an independent review to consider how these risks arose and what could be done to reduce the likelihood of a similar situation arising again in the future. In June 2019, the Compliance Improvement Review's summary and recommendations were published on Gov.UK and work began immediately to address these recommendations. One of these recommendations was "the satisfactory delivery of this change programme should be independently verified by the end of June 2020."

On 6 July 2020, I made a Written Ministerial Statement to notify Parliament that due to the adverse impacts of Covid-19 the independent verification of the implementation of the recommendations would be delayed until the start of 2021. Despite the ongoing impact of Covid-19, the independent verification has now taken place.

The independent verification process was led by Mary Calam, a former Director-General in the Home Office. She considered whether the work undertaken since the summer of 2019 had addressed the concerns raised in Sir Martin Donnelly's report and delivered the outcomes he had intended. Mary had access to all relevant documentation and personnel, and conducted interviews with senior members of the relevant organisations as well as with focus groups of staff. I would like to place on record my thanks to Mary and the review team, who have produced a comprehensive report in a difficult working environment due to Covid-19.

I was provided with a copy of the verification report earlier this year and have since had the opportunity to discuss it with Mary. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner and the

Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament have both received copies of the full report.

The verification report concludes that significant and measurable progress has been made and that the new operating model is an excellent start to ensure any future compliance risks are identified and addressed early. The report finds that “MI5 have used the Compliance Improvement Review to make fundamental changes across the whole organisation” and that “there is new governance to oversee compliance and security risks and resourcing for compliance work has been significantly increased.” The report further notes that “the broader changes that MI5 has made to strengthen its legal compliance risk management processes, instil a culture of individual accountability for legal compliance risk and ensure that compliance is built in to new products should give Ministers greater confidence that new risks will be identified early and addressed promptly.”

The report does acknowledge that, in places, work remains to be done and that maintaining high levels of compliance is – by definition – an ongoing effort. MI5 have already put in place a successor programme to take forward further work and the Director-General of MI5 and I are fully committed to ensuring this work remains a priority. I will continue to monitor progress through the quarterly MI5 Ministerial Assurance Group which I chair.

I am very grateful to the Director-General of MI5 and his staff, as well as my own officials, for the immense progress that has been made since Sir Martin Donnelly completed his Compliance Improvement Review in June 2019.

A copy of the verification summary document will be made available on Gov.UK and will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRANSPORT

■ Local Transport Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS65\]](#)

The Government and Mayor of London have agreed a third extraordinary Transport for London funding deal of £1.08bn for the period up until 11 December 2021. The deal will replace the agreement signed in October 2020, which, following extensions agreed in March 2021 and in May 2021, expired on 28 May 2021.

The funding settlement is further proof of our commitment to supporting the capital and the transport network on which it depends, whilst ensuring that our support is fair to the national taxpayer. The government will continue to review passenger demand in line with the Prime Minister’s roadmap and will continue to support the fare revenues lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding settlement sets out further measures to sustainably support London’s transport network. Within the next deal period, the Mayor has agreed to; deliver £300m of savings or new income sources in 2021/2022; deliver £0.5 - £1bn of new or increased

income sources each year by 2023; prepare a revised medium-term capital investment programme; carry out a review of TfL's pension scheme; set aside at least £100m to continue the delivery of active travel programmes; and review options for long term funding reform in partnership with the Government. To help TfL achieve financial sustainability, the Mayor has agreed to prepare a plan to accelerate TfL's existing modernisation programme of £730m by April 2023.

The Mayor has agreed to work collaboratively with DfT on a joint programme for implementing higher levels of automatic train operation on the London Underground, as is the case on many metro systems worldwide. Over the course of this funding period, the Mayor and TfL will make progress towards the conversion of at least one London Underground line to full automation but with an on-board attendant. This technology has the potential to offer a more punctual, reliable, customer-responsive and safer service that is less susceptible to human error. TfL will also lead market engagement into technology for protecting passengers at station platforms.

The London Underground is the world's oldest underground railway and the Government is committed to supporting the capital's transport network, ensuring that it meets the needs of Londoners as we recover from the pandemic and that it is modernised for the 21st century.

TfL and the London Boroughs are responsible for local road maintenance, including bridge repairs. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is responsible for the safety and maintenance of Hammersmith Bridge. However, given the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, during the period of this agreement, we expect to draw up a memorandum of understanding between HMG, TfL and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham to fund the reopening of Hammersmith Bridge – initially to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic and, depending on cost, to motorists. Funding will be conditional on the following:

- All parties must scrutinise and agree the cost of the project.
- Each party agrees to pay a share of the cost. Repair costs are to be led by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and TfL; HMG will not directly contribute more than 1/3 of the costs
- That the independent Board responsible for the Case for Continued Safe Operation, reporting to London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, will conduct a new assessment for controlled and limited reopening of Hammersmith Bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic once further investigations and report validations are completed at the end of June. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham shares the assessment with the government and TfL.

The Government has repeatedly shown that it is committed to supporting the running of essential services across the capital whilst we recover from this pandemic, while ensuring fairness and value for money for the taxpayer. The Government continue to work with TfL and the Mayor so TfL can be financially sustainable as soon as possible.

This deal takes Government support to TfL since March 2020 to over £4bn, whilst continuing to spend money on vital infrastructure projects to level up the national transport network outside of London.

■ **Motoring Services Agencies Business Plans 2021-22**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Rachel Maclean):

[\[HCWS66\]](#)

My Noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Baroness Vere of Norbiton) has made the following Ministerial Statement.

I am pleased to announce the publication of the 2021-22 business plans for the Department for Transport's Motoring Agencies - the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA).

The business plans set out:

- 1) the key business priorities that each agency will deliver and any significant changes they plan to make to their services, and;
- 2) the key performance indicators, by which their performance will be assessed.

These plans allow service users and members of the public to understand the agencies' plans for delivering their key services, progressing their transformation programmes, and managing their finances.

The business plans will be available electronically on GOV.UK and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. DVLA [DVLA Business Plan 2021-22.pdf]
2. DVSA [DVSA business plan 2021-22.pdf]
3. VCA [VCA Business Plan 2021-22.pdf]