



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 8 June 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:45 P.M., 08 June 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.
Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS**CABINET OFFICE****■ Marriage: Young People****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[7298\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) 16-year-olds and (b) 17-year-olds were married in (i) England (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years.

Julia Lopez:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ7298 [UKSA's final response to PQ7298.pdf]

DEFENCE**■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[8558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the Infrastructure and Projects Authority Independent Gateway 4 report on Ajax Scout.

Jeremy Quin:

There are no plans to publish the Gateway Assurance report of the Armoured Cavalry programme. The report contains commercially sensitive material which the Department would not normally release. The current level of delivery confidence and the reasons behind such an assessment will shortly be published by the IPA in their Annual Report and accompanying transparency release.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Dormant Assets Scheme****Rachael Maskell:**[\[8671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he made of the potential merits of establishing a community wealth fund from the Dormant Assets scheme.

Matt Warman:

The Dormant Assets Scheme currently dedicates the English portion of funding to youth, financial inclusion, and social investment initiatives. The Dormant Assets Bill, introduced to the House of Lords on 12 May, seeks to expand the Scheme to a wider

range of assets and enables these causes to be reviewed. Provided the Bill passes, the government has committed to launching a consultation to give the public and industry stakeholders a say in how funds are spent in England. No decisions will be made on whether the causes in England should change until the responses to this consultation have been duly considered.

■ **Football Index**

Sajid Javid: **[8579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the review into the Football Index Gambling Product is taking to engage with former customers who may be able to support its work.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Secretary of State has appointed Malcolm Sheehan QC to lead the independent review of the Football Index gambling product and we have published its scope and terms of reference on gov.uk. As I said in my Written Ministerial Statement of 7 June, many former customers of Football Index have already contacted the Department to provide information and they can continue to do so via gamblingactreview@dcms.gov.uk. The statement can be found at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-06-07/hcws63>

■ **Internet: Children**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: **[10223]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Landmark laws to protect children and stop abuse online published, published on 12 May 2021, what his timetable is for launching the consultation on online advertising and online fraud.

Caroline Dinenage:

My department continues to work closely with other government departments, including the Home Office as the government department responsible for tackling fraud, to develop a coherent approach to online advertising that supports competition and protects consumers.

We are working with industry, regulators and consumer groups to understand the specific harms that are being linked to advertising, including online fraud and scams.

Following a call for evidence in 2020, the Online Advertising Programme will launch a public consultation later this year to examine how best to strengthen standards around the placement and content of online advertising, and to ensure they can be effectively enforced.

More information about the Programme can be found here:

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

■ Mobile Phones: Fraud**John Spellar:****[7730]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with phone companies on increasing cooperation between (a) phone companies and (b) public authorities to counter mobile phone fraud.

Matt Warman:

Law enforcement partners have stepped up their efforts to tackle this type of crime, arresting over a hundred criminals involved in some of the most despicable types of fraud and taking down thousands of phone numbers as well as fake websites and email addresses.

The DCMS and Home Office are working closely with telecommunications providers, regulators and consumer groups to protect the public from crimes such as mobile phone fraud. As part of this work, we are developing a voluntary charter of the actions telecoms companies will take to prevent fraud.

The Government is also exploring a range of measures aimed at tackling the criminal abuse of mobile telecommunications across a range of different crime types including fraud.

- We are encouraging the public to forward suspicious text messages to 7726 (which is free of charge) and continue to encourage anyone who has been targeted by a scam to report it to Action Fraud.
- We have supported the National Trading Standards Scams Team to roll out call blocking devices to vulnerable people, to protect some of the most vulnerable in society from nuisance calls and scams.
- The Government has banned cold calls from personal injury firms and pensions providers unless the consumer has explicitly agreed to be contacted. It has introduced director liability for nuisance calls.
- The Government will take further action through our Fraud Action Plan, an ambitious approach grounded in prevention, education, effective enforcement and regulatory reforms.
- The Government has launched [a dedicated web page](#) on protecting individuals and businesses from COVID-19 related fraud, with easy-to-follow tips and a list of places you can get help and advice if you think you are being scammed.

■ Parkrun: Coronavirus**Helen Hayes:****[R] [4642]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will issue guidance on the safe reopening of Parkrun events under covid-19 regulations.

Nigel Huddleston:

I refer my honourable colleague to the [answer](#) I gave to written parliamentary question 3831.

■ Telecommunications: South East

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[8706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to improve data connectivity in the South East.

Matt Warman:

The Government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible. It is the Government's view that the best way to achieve this is to create a competition-friendly environment in areas where deployment is commercially viable while focussing government funds on the 20% of the country where commercial deployment is unlikely. As a result of this approach, there is now a thriving market of over 80 providers rolling out gigabit broadband all over the UK. We are also investing £5bn to ensure the hardest-to-reach areas in the UK receive coverage through Project Gigabit.

This approach is working. According to ThinkBroadband, in the South East, gigabit connectivity has increased from just 8% at the start of 2020 to 35% today. Average download speeds have also increased by 40% in the same period, from below 40 megabits per second to over 56 megabits per second.

There are 23 Superfast projects in the Government's Superfast Broadband Programme in the South East, which have already provided coverage to 497,000 premises. Local Full Fibre Network projects have been completed in both Mid and West Sussex. 94 Rural Gigabit Connectivity hub sites have been contracted in the South East area and 48 sites, including schools have been delivered. The South East has benefited from the Voucher scheme which has seen 6,466 voucher connections with a value of over £13m invested in connectivity in the area coupled with a further £8.8m Top Up Vouchers issued. There are also a further 11,069 issued vouchers that are pending connections, totalling more than £19m.

Areas in the South East will also be amongst the first to benefit from our £5 billion Project Gigabit programme. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are in Phase 1b of the delivery plan, with Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, East and West Berkshire, Oxfordshire, East Sussex, Kent and Surrey all currently in line for Gigabit-capable rollout through Phase 2.

Furthermore, on 9 March last year, the Government agreed a £1 billion deal with the Mobile Network Operators to deliver the Shared Rural Network. This will see the operators collectively increase 4G mobile phone coverage throughout the UK to 95% by the end of the programme, underpinned by legally binding coverage commitments. The South East will benefit from the operator-led element of the Shared Rural Network which will see operators collectively invest over £530 million in a shared network of new and existing phone masts. This will help tackle partial not spots - areas where there is currently coverage from at least one, but not all operators. There have already been 700 new and upgraded sites announced by the operators this year and they are on track to eliminate the majority of these partial not spots by mid-2024.

EDUCATION

■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Catherine West:

[7891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the transmission of covid-19 in (a) schools and (b) other education settings through increased ventilation.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is working closely with Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care, as well as stakeholders across the sector, to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, and to continue to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE supported system of controls.

The Department continues to review the ventilation requirements in the system of controls including considering whether monitoring Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) levels would be appropriate. We are working with the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and NHS Test and Trace on a pilot project to measure CO₂ levels in typical classrooms to enable us to provide more nuanced guidance to the sector. We will continue to consider updating our guidance as results from this pilot project emerge.

Current evidence recommends that the way to control COVID-19 is the same, even with the current new variants. The PHE supported system of controls which have been in use throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, which includes ventilation, continue to be the right measures to take.

PHE keeps all these controls under review, based on the latest evidence. Schools and colleges therefore need to continue to implement these controls. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>. Additional guidance from the Health and Safety Executive on air conditioning and ventilation during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm>.

■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs

Rachel Hopkins:

[5277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the difference in average per pupil funding was between (a) 5 to 16 year olds and (b) 16 to 19 year olds in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes statistics on school revenue funding annually. The latest publication, from January 2021, covers the financial years 2010/11 through to 2021/22 and is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find->

[statistics/school-funding-statistics#dataBlock-10b3bbd5-58b1-401d-9aaf-9daaa184a6df-tables](#).

The publication shows the average per pupil funding to schools for 5 to 16 year olds.

TABLE 1 - AVERAGE PER PUPIL FUNDING, IN CASH TERMS, TO SCHOOLS FOR 5 TO 16 YEAR OLDS.

Financial year	Average per pupil funding, cash terms
2017-18	£5,590
2018-19	£5,730
2019-20	£5,920
2020-21	£6,280
2021-22	£6,490

Table 2 uses the published 16-19 funding allocations [1] to derive the average funding per student for all types of school and college for the last 5 academic years. Funding allocations for further education colleges of 16 to 19 education for the 2021/22 academic year have yet to be finalised.

TABLE 2 - AVERAGE PER STUDENT FUNDING, IN CASH TERMS, FOR 16 TO 19 YEAR OLDS

Academic year	Average per student funding, cash terms
2016/17	£4,488
2017/18	£4,481
2018/19	£4,504
2019/20	£4,516
2020/21	£4,958

5 to 16 year old pupils in schools are funded differently from 16 to 19 students, using two separate systems with different methodologies. The numbers of hours young people spend in learning is also different between the two phases of education, and published data for the 5 to 16 phase is by financial year, and for the 16 to 19 funding by academic year. The figures for 5 to 16 education include high needs funding and additional grants, such as grants to provide help with teacher pay and pension costs, and to support free meals for students, when the equivalents have not been included in the 16 to 19 figures. Therefore, direct comparisons cannot be applied.

[1] The 16 to 19 per student funding calculation only includes institutions that have students receiving total programme funding. Some institutions receive only high needs funding – their students are not included in this calculation. In addition, the

Condition of Funding adjustment for English and maths and the Advanced Maths Premium have been incorporated in total programme funding in 2019/20 to make this consistent with the definition in 2020/21. The condition of funding adjustment for English and maths has been incorporated into the total programme funding in 2016/17 to 2018/19 to make this consistent with the definition in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Clive Efford: [976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data he held on the (a) aggregate number of cases, (b) incidence and (c) location of the coronavirus variant B.1.617.2 linked to schools up to 10 May 2021 when the Government made the announcement to remove requirements for face coverings in schools.

Clive Efford: [977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information he received from Public Health England on the (a) aggregate number of covid-19 cases and (b) incidence and location of Coronavirus variant B.1.617.2 linked to schools before 10 May 2021 prior to the decision to remove the requirement for face coverings to be worn in schools.

Nick Gibb:

Data on variants of concern is held by the Department of Health and Social Care, where Public Health England (PHE) leads on surveillance and outbreak management. Data on variants, including the Delta variant (B.1.617.2), was considered by the Government as part of meeting the four tests, in making the decision to proceed with Step 3 of the roadmap announced on 10 May.

PHE has published a technical briefing on COVID-19 variants of concern and variants under investigation in England, which is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/991343/Variants of Concern VOC Technical Briefing 14.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/991343/Variants_of_Concern_VOC_Technical_Briefing_14.pdf). This sets out (page 36-45) data on the number of clusters or outbreaks associated with a range of settings, including education settings, covering the latest available data and the period prior to the decision and announcement on Step 3.

PHE also publishes the total number of cases of each variant in the UK as part of information on variants of COVID-19, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-sars-cov-2-variant>. This includes total confirmed Delta variant cases and prevalence split by region, as part of PHE weekly technical briefings, covering the latest available data and previously the period prior to the decision and announcement on Step 3.

The Government's decision that face coverings no longer need to be worn in classrooms by staff, pupils or students, or in corridors or communal areas by pupils and students, was made in line with Step 3 of the roadmap. When the policy on face coverings in classrooms was introduced, this was an appropriate precautionary temporary measure while rates of infection were high in the community. As the four

tests for easing restrictions in Step 3 of the roadmap were met, it was an appropriate time to remove the recommendation. In all schools we continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible.

While this moves children towards a greater sense of normality, measures within the PHE-supported system of controls remain very important to reduce transmission in schools, for example, social distancing and regular hand washing. Regular rapid testing will also continue to help find and isolate asymptomatic cases when they do occur, and we continue to encourage everyone to play their part and test themselves twice each week.

The reintroduction of face coverings for pupils, students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. In all cases, any educational drawbacks should be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission. The Local Action Committee structure (bronze/silver/gold) should be used in such circumstances to re-introduce the use of face coverings. Immediate outbreak response (at the level of individual settings or a cluster of settings) remains for local directors of public health to advise on.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Farmers: Retirement**

Tim Farron:

[7773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate the Government has made of the number of farmers expected to retire under the Government's proposed exit scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

Our proposed lump sum exit scheme will provide support for farmers in England who wish to exit the industry. By doing so, this will free up land for new entrants and those farmers who wish to expand.

In 2018, we undertook a survey of around 1,000 farmers as part of our planning for the Agriculture Act. 6% of those surveyed said they wanted to leave farming but felt they were not able to do so at that time. Financial reasons were given as the main barrier.

There will be a range of factors which will affect individual farmers' decisions about whether they wish to take the lump sum and exit farming. The consultation will be used to gather further evidence about likely uptake.

Our consultation can be found here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/agricultural-policy/lump-sum-and-delinked-payments-england/>. This consultation is open until 11 August 2021.

Tim Farron: [7774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the proportion of retiring farmers who will be replaced by new entrants.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is currently carrying out a consultation on a proposed lump sum exit scheme for farmers in England (<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/agricultural-policy/lump-sum-and-delinked-payments-england/>). This consultation is open until 11 August 2021.

We think that, by helping those farmers who wish to retire or leave the industry to do so, this scheme will free up land for both new entrants and expanding farmers. Our consultation will be used to gather evidence of how the scheme could benefit both groups of farmers.

■ Slaughterhouses: Finance

Paul Maynard: [7779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on using provisions in the Agriculture Act 2020 to fund small abattoirs.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra recognises the contribution that small abattoirs make to local supply chains and that there are animal welfare benefits in shorter journey times to slaughter.

The Government is currently funding one mobile abattoir project through the Rural Development Programme for England as part of the Growth Programme. The project is farmer led and is aiming to be operational later this year.

We are also exploring potential opportunities under the Agriculture Act to fund small abattoirs that demonstrate a viable business model, meet the needs of the market and can clearly demonstrate delivery of public goods.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Ahmed Mansoor

Afzal Khan: [7935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his UAE counterpart on the release of human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor.

James Cleverly:

Officials have raised the case of Ahmed Mansoor with Emirati authorities, including the UAE Ambassador to the UK. We encourage all states, including the UAE, to uphold international human rights obligations.

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Brendan O'Hara: [\[7836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the visit by the Rt Hon Member for Braintree to Bahrain in March 2021, whether the Government raised human rights issues during that visit, including (a) capital punishment, (b) torture, (c) political prisoners, (d) the abuse and detention of juveniles and (e) cases of individuals including (i) Mohammed Ramadhan, (ii) Husain Moosa, (iii) Hassan Mushaima, (iv) Dr Abduljalil AlSingace, (v) Abdulhadi AlKhawaja and (vi) Sheikh Ali Salman.

James Cleverly:

I visited Bahrain in March 2021 to participate in the Bahrain-UK Joint Working Group. Discussions covered a range of issues, including specific human rights themes and cases.

■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

Brendan O'Hara: [\[7834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the UK Ambassador to Bahrain did not meet families of Jau Prison inmates who were subject to reported (a) abuse, (b) enforced disappearance and (c) incommunicado detention in Bahrain following a reported attack by police in that prison on 17 April 2021.

James Cleverly:

Activists and others we understand to be family members of Jau prison inmates came unannounced to the British Embassy in Manama on 4 May to hand over a letter. They did not ask to meet the British Ambassador.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[7835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 750 on Bahrain: Political Prisoners, whether the UK Ambassador to Bahrain raised human rights issues on his 7 May 2021 visit to Jau Prison, including the (a) issue of political prisoners and (b) cases of (i) Sheikh Ali Salman, (ii) Abdulhadi AlKhawaja, (iii) Hassan Mushaima and (iv) Dr Abduljalil AlSingace.

James Cleverly:

As I stated in my reply of 17 May, the visit to Jau prison on 3 May enabled the UK Ambassador and other international representatives to raise human rights matters, to see the facilities at Jau prison first hand and to understand the measures implemented to counter Covid-19. We continue to raise specific cases with senior government officials in Bahrain, as well as with the Oversight bodies.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[8627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 752, on what most recent date the

UK Government held discussions with its Bahraini counterparts on allowing the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture access to (a) Bahrain and (b) Jau Prison in Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises human rights matters with the Government of Bahrain, including at senior levels. We continue to encourage both the Government of Bahrain and the UN to engage with each other on human rights issues.

■ **Eritrea: Refugees**

Helen Hayes:

[\[8686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) UNHCR and (b) other humanitarian agencies have full access to Eritrean refugees in Tigray.

Helen Hayes:

[\[8687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the (a) status and (b) whereabouts of the Eritrean refugees who are reported to have been forcibly returned to Eritrea.

Helen Hayes:

[\[8688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea on the forced return of Eritrean refugees.

James Duddridge:

The UK has been consistent in calling for the protection of civilians in Ethiopia, unfettered humanitarian access, and respect for human rights. We are concerned at reports that Eritrean troops entered Ethiopian refugee camps in Tigray and forced a number of refugees to return to Eritrea. If proven, this would be a serious violation of international law. Alleged violations of international law must be investigated and we have consistently called for independent investigations into such allegations, and that perpetrators are held to account. 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.

The British Ambassador in Eritrea raised our concerns with the Eritrean Foreign Minister in December 2020, who denied that Eritrean forces had forcibly returned Eritrean refugees to Eritrea. We are extremely concerned that humanitarian agencies, including the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), do not have access to refugee camps in Tigray, meaning our understanding of the humanitarian and protection context in camps and refugee hosting areas is limited. It is the responsibility of the host state to protect refugees on their territory and this was acknowledged by the Government of Ethiopia when we raised the matter.

There are numerous shocking reports of atrocities committed by Eritrean forces in Tigray, and their continued presence is fueling insecurity. These forces must leave Ethiopia immediately. We continue to press hard for this commitment to be delivered.

■ **Gaza: Israel**

Julie Elliott:

[\[7175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK funded projects in Gaza of the 11 day Israeli bombardment.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May, which is an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life. It is now important for Israel to facilitate rapid humanitarian access in and out of Gaza. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop.

We have not yet completed an assessment of the effect of the conflict on UK supported programmes. We are following up with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which the UK funds, on their initial assessment of damage to their installations and interruption to services. The World Bank is commencing a more comprehensive Rapid Damage and Needs assessment, which is expected to report in one month.

■ **Gaza: Overseas Aid**

Julie Elliott:

[\[7174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional funding the Government plans to provide for emergency assistance to Gaza.

James Cleverly:

I announced on 20 May that the UK is providing an initial £3.2 million to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, which launched on 19 May. The emergency appeal by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) focuses on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of vulnerable Palestinians living in Gaza.

This UK support will help UNRWA deliver life-saving humanitarian aid to those that need it most. Existing UK aid to UNRWA is already helping the Agency to provide food supplies to more than one million refugees in Gaza this year. The international community needs to ensure UNRWA is able to save lives and reduce the suffering.

■ **Israel: Palestinians**

Julie Elliott:

[\[7176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many meetings officials based at the embassy in Tel Aviv have had with representatives of Palestinian citizens of Israel in the last (a) 12 months and (b) five years.

James Cleverly:

The British Embassy in Tel Aviv maintains relations with a wide range of contacts, including Arab citizens of Israel, as part of the normal business of the embassy.

■ Mozambique: Armed Conflict**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[8777\]](#)

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

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in the north-east of Mozambique, and the increasing attacks by groups with links to Islamic extremism. As I made clear publicly on 26 and 28 March, we condemn the appalling attacks in Cabo Delgado and stand with the people of Mozambique against terrorism. The UK Government continues to support the Government of Mozambique to address the causes of the conflict.

Lord Ahmad spoke to Mozambican Foreign Minister Macamo on 11 March, reaffirming UK support to help Mozambique fight terrorism, and stressing that human rights must be at the forefront of the government's approach. I also raised Cabo Delgado when I spoke to the Foreign Minister on 4 February. The Foreign Secretary last discussed the situation in northern Mozambique with President Nyusi on 11 June 2020, urging him to address the underlying causes of the insurgency as well as its effects. Our High Commissioner in Maputo most recently met President Nyusi on 1 April to discuss the Palma attacks and how the UK could support Mozambique's response.

■ Oman: Public Order**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[7945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Gulf Strategy Fund and previous programmes, when the UK last assisted Oman in public order training.

James Cleverly:

The Gulf Strategy Fund was used to deliver a Public Order and Public Safety Training project in Oman from December 2020 to March 2021.

■ Sri Lanka: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund**Ed Davey:**[\[7091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what amount of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund budget for programmes in Sri Lanka (a) was unspent in 2020-21, (b) is allocated for 2021-22; how the underspend was allocated from the 2020-21 budget; and if he will make a statement.

Ed Davey:

[7092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to continue Conflict, Stability and Security Fund programmes in Sri Lanka after the end of 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: Information on the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) budget for 2020/21 will be published in the CSSF programme summary, which will be made publicly available before parliament rises for summer. Any future CSSF allocations will be subject to the outcome of the spending review.

■ **West Bank: Demolition**

Caroline Lucas:

[6253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2021 to Question 678 on West Bank: Demolition, if he will make it his policy to publish the data and records he holds as a result of the monitoring the UK Government undertakes with key partners of any incidents of confiscation and demolition of donor-funded assistance and structures.

James Cleverly:

Data on demolition and displacement in the West Bank is published by The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/reports/west-bank-demolitions-and-displacement>. On the issue of confiscations and demolitions, the UK's position is clear. We call on Israel to end these practices, and to allow the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid for those who have had their homes demolished or confiscated.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Jessica Morden:

[900837]

What steps his Department is taking to support targeted research into motor neurone disease.

Helen Whately:

The Government is supporting research into motor neurone disease (MND). On 29 April, I jointly hosted a roundtable event on boosting MND research with the National Institute for Health Research Sheffield Biomedical Research Centre.

The event brought together researchers, charities, people with MND and funders and we will be working closely with these stakeholders over the coming months to consider ways forward for this vital area of research.

Jonathan Gullis: [\[900838\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the progress of the covid-19 vaccine rollout programme across the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have administered over 60 million vaccine jabs in the United Kingdom, with 75% of the adult population already having received their first dose. Over 25 million people have now received their second dose and

53% of people aged 30 to 39 years have received at least one dose since the programme began opening up to the age group on 13 May. This week, we will open the vaccination programme to ages 25 to 29 years old.

We are on track to meet our vaccination target to offer all adults a vaccine by the end of July.

Damien Moore: [\[900839\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on preventing the spread of new and existing covid-19 variants.

Matt Hancock:

We continue to strengthen our partnership between local and national public health experts, local government and the National Health Service and employers to coordinate our response to the virus and share resources and intelligence to increase our impact. NHS Test and Trace initiated a programme to pilot additional interventions to improve compliance with self-isolation and encourage people to come forward for testing, particularly in areas of enduring transmission and variant of concern outbreaks.

Liz Twist: [\[900841\]](#)

What recent progress he has made on implementing the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

All recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully. The Government will respond in full to the report later this year.

Fiona Bruce: [\[900842\]](#)

What recent progress he has made on implementing the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

All recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully. The Government will respond in full to the report later this year.

James Daly:[\[900843\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on supporting areas experiencing an increase in covid-19 infection rates.

Matt Hancock:

We continue to strengthen our partnership between local and national public health experts, local government and the National Health Service and employers to coordinate our response to the virus and share resources and intelligence to increase our impact. NHS Test and Trace initiated a programme to pilot additional interventions to improve compliance with self-isolation and encourage people to come forward for testing, particularly in areas of enduring transmission and variant of concern outbreaks.

Kate Osborne:[\[900844\]](#)

What steps he is taking to tackle backlogs in cancer diagnosis, treatment, and care.

Jo Churchill:

Cancer is a priority. As well as a £325 million investment in National Health Service diagnostic machines, with plans to increase endoscopy and computerised tomography capacity, we have provided an additional £1 billion to the NHS to tackle the elective backlog.

This will ensure there is sufficient capacity in place to diagnose and treat the additional people coming into the system and reduce the number of people waiting over 62 days on cancer pathways with a focus for those who have had their care delayed.

To encourage patients to come forward to their general practitioner (GP) if they have worrying symptoms we launched the successful 'Help us Help you' campaign, with latest March 2021 data showing urgent GP cancer referrals to be 190% higher than in April 2020 .

Sir Desmond Swayne:[\[900845\]](#)

What recent progress has been made on vaccinating people against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have administered over 60 million vaccine jabs in the United Kingdom, with 75% of the adult population already having received their first dose. Over 25 million people have now received their second dose and

53% of people aged 30 to 39 years have received at least one dose since the programme began opening up to the age group on 13 May. This week, we will open the vaccination programme to ages 25 to 29 years old.

We are on track to meet our vaccination target to offer all adults a vaccine by the end of July.

Anne McLaughlin:

[\[900853\]](#)

What steps he is taking to support the retention of health and care staff beyond the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The workforce are at the forefront of our plans for recovery and we are ensuring they get the support they need and have time to rest.

This includes access to wellbeing support and rapid referral to mental health hubs.

■ **Audiology: Waiting Lists**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[7233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for NHS audiological services; and what recent assessment he has made of trends in time taken for a diagnosis of a hearing condition to be provided by the NHS.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: National Health Service audiology services are locally commissioned services and responsibility for waiting times lies with local commissioners. While no recent assessment has been made of trends in diagnosis, work is ongoing to improve access to audiological services. This is being led by the Elective Recovery Programme and Getting It Right First Time.

■ **Birth Certificates: LGBT people**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[7182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to change the birth registration process so that both parents' names are included on the birth certificate where LGBT+ parents (a) are not married and (b) have not conceived via an officially registered clinic; and if he will make statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, as amended in 2008, contains provisions for female same-sex couples to register a birth and gain legal parenthood if fertility treatment takes place at a United Kingdom licensed clinic.

The Government has no plans to change the legal parenthood provisions set out in the Act.

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

John Healey:

[\[2189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on care home workers being required to use their annual leave entitlement in the event that they need to stay at home and self-isolate.

Helen Whately:

The Department has written to local authorities and care providers to remind them of the importance of paying staff normal wages when self-isolating. Since May 2020 the Government has made available an Infection Control Fund and one of the stated purposes of this fund is to enable care providers to pay care home workers their full wage in the event they need to self-isolate. We are working with local government, stakeholders and care providers to ensure as many providers as possible are following our guidance.

■ Care Homes: Finance

Dan Jarvis: [\[7181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on making specific financial support available to (a) community and (b) residential care homes.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has regular discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a variety of issues, including funding for social care.

■ Carers: Dementia

Feryal Clark: [\[7299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that unpaid carers of people with dementia are supported to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing as part of the Government's forthcoming social care reforms.

Helen Whately:

The Government recognises the vital support and care provided by unpaid carers. We are committed to supporting carers in a way that maintains their own health and wellbeing.

We know that unpaid care is part of a sustainable health and social care system. We want to build a system of care and support in which unpaid carers are supported, and care receivers have choice and control over their lives; over what they do and how they choose to live.

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.

■ Cereals

Alex Norris:

[8723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to launch a public health campaign on increasing fibre and whole grain consumption.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: Public Health England (PHE) has no plans to launch any campaigns specifically on fibre.

However, PHE's Better Health, Change4Life and Start4Life campaigns encourage fibre consumption through advice to eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day and to choose wholegrain foods where possible. This information is available on the NHS weight loss plan app and the Better Health Website, and can be found at the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/>

It is also available on the Change4Life website at the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>, and the Start4Life website at the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life>. These websites which provide healthy recipes and ideas for swaps.

■ Children: Disability

Simon Jupp:

[6532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle social isolation experienced by disabled children and their families during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

In 2020/21 we allocated £3.6 million to voluntary and community sector organisations to support autistic people, people with a learning disability and disabled people, including disabled children and their families, throughout the pandemic. This funded services providing direct, practical support for their physical and mental wellbeing including learning and play opportunities for disabled children to help combat social isolation and accessible arts, sports and wellbeing activities for children and adults with complex disabilities. In addition, through the 'COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan', we have invested over £31.5 million in organisations supporting people who experience loneliness, refreshed our Let's Talk Loneliness campaign, and brought together a Tackling Loneliness Network.

■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Emma Hardy:

[2420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department are taking to improve the process of diagnosis for people with myalgic encephalomyelitis.

Helen Whately:

On 20 September 2017, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence announced its decision to undertake a full update of their myalgic encephalomyelitis guideline following a review of the latest available evidence on the diagnosis and management of the condition and a public consultation. This will set the direction on best practice in this area and is due for publication in August 2021.

Caroline Lucas:[\[6252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what UK medical school teaching is provided on the chronic fatigue syndrome known as ME; whether he has plans to issue guidance on that matter; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Each medical school in the England sets its own undergraduate curriculum which must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC), as the regulator of the medical profession, in its Outcomes for Graduates. The GMC expects that, in fulfilling these standards, newly qualified doctors are able to manage care needs relating to chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME).

CFS/ME is also specifically included in postgraduate medical curricula for specialties where it is most likely to be encountered, including general practice, paediatrics, tropical medicine and allergy and immunology. The Government currently has no plans to issue guidance.

■ Coronavirus: India**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[6403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has sent surplus personal protective equipment to India to help tackle the covid-19 pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: The United Kingdom has sent three oxygen generators, 1,200 ventilators and 495 oxygen concentrators in response to the Indian Government's most urgent priorities. We have approached the Government of India to offer excess personal protective equipment. However, to date, they have not requested such support from the UK Government.

■ Coronavirus: Overseas Workers**Sir Alan Campbell:**[\[6202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will permit UK residents working overseas to complete any required quarantine at home upon return to the UK.

Jo Churchill:

You cannot travel to the United Kingdom if you've been in a red list country in the previous 10 days unless you're a British or Irish national or have residence rights in the UK. Everyone allowed to enter England who has been in a red list country in the

10 days before they arrive must quarantine for 10 full days in a managed quarantine hotel and take a COVID-19 test on or before day 2 and on or after day 8 of quarantining. Those travelling from amber list countries should quarantine at home or their own accommodation for 10 full days, as well as taking a COVID-19 test on or before day 2 and on or after day 8. You may be able to end quarantine early if you pay for a private COVID-19 test through the Test to Release scheme.

Some people are exempt from some or all COVID-19 travel and entry requirements because of their job. The guidance listing the jobs that qualify for an exemption can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules>

■ Dental Services

Rachael Maskell:

[7871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional dental training commissioners he plans for each of the next five years.

Helen Whately:

In England, the number of dentistry school places is regulated by the Government and controlled through annual intake targets operated by the Office for Students. In academic year 2019/20, the undergraduate target intake for dentistry was 810.

Health Education England (HEE) is responsible for commissioning, coordinating and quality assuring training places for postgraduate dental training. In 2019/20 HEE commissioned 868 dental foundation training posts. For dentists continuing training beyond the foundation programme, in order to work in a hospital setting, HEE commissioned 501 dental core training posts and 409 dental specialty training posts.

Government funding for any potential future expansion in dental training places would be dependent upon workforce planning requirements and the outcomes of a future Spending Review. The Government is committed to ensuring the number of dental training places is in line with England's workforce requirements and continues to monitor the effectiveness of the current arrangements.

■ Disability: Children

Rosie Cooper:

[6219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the finding of the Disabled Children's Partnership's No End In Sight Report, that six in 10 families with disabled children are still experiencing some form of delay with health appointments and operations, what assessment he has made of delays to health appointments in disabled children; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing specific funding to help disabled children access health appointments.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: No specific assessment has been made. However, as part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services to disabled children. NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance making clear that essential community services must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or who are going through an assessment for one. On 25 March 2021 NHS England and NHS Improvement issued 2021/22 operational planning guidance, including an elective recovery framework and expectations in relation to re-establishing services. This framework includes elective in-patient activity for children and young people aged 0 to 16 years old.

Health Professions: Training**Anthony Browne:**[\[6499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on introducing the flexible training for healthcare professionals seeking to switch discipline announced on 9 February 2020.

Helen Whately:

The Department continues to work with Health Education England and other partners on a range of initiatives to reform the medical and nursing training systems to ensure that the National Health Service workforce aligns with patient and service need. This includes taking action to widen access into healthcare professions and increase the flexibility of training pathways.

As part of this work, the Government is considering opportunities as a result of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union to support healthcare professionals to switch disciplines. Any changes to training for regulated healthcare professions would be developed in conjunction with stakeholders and would be subject to full public consultation where appropriate. Approved education providers would need to consider prior learning to assess the flexibility of programmes or entry requirements and any individual training courses that arose from this work would need to be approved by the relevant regulator.

Health Services: Learning Disability**Helen Hayes:**[\[3071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many former residents of Winterbourne View are in in-patient units.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: From 2013, the NHS Improving Lives programme carried out a review, with consent, for 45 of the 48 people who had been a patient in Winterbourne View. The reviews found that many of the people had left hospital and

were living in or close to their home communities. Eleven people were still in an inpatient setting at the time, but over the course of the review, this reduced to five people with imminent dates for leaving hospital.

The Improving Lives programme concluded in March 2015. Responsibility for ongoing oversight of the care of those people was agreed with local teams working with individuals. The national team did not have a mandate for continued collection of information about individuals or tracking of their care. Current available information indicates that the number of former patients of Winterbourne View who are currently in in-patient units is very small but we are unable to provide further information as individuals could be identified.

Rosie Cooper: [\[4565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many former residents of Winterbourne View are in inpatient units as at 20 May 2021.

Helen Whately:

Current available information indicates that the number of former patients of Winterbourne View who are currently in in-patient units is very small. We are unable to provide further information as individuals could be identified.

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan: [\[8729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the guidance for visiting patients in (a) hospitals and (b) hospices in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Visiting guidance for inpatient settings, including hospitals and hospices is regularly reviewed.

Most recently, visitor lateral flow testing has been added to the guidance to facilitate safer visiting across a number of hospital settings following assessment of levels of community prevalence of COVID-19.

Most hospices are independent, charitable organisations, with visiting policies at the discretion of the hospice manager.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Margaret Greenwood: [\[6325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the clinical outcomes of patients who have been discharged under the Discharge to Assess model.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: The National Health Service has commissioned an independent evaluation of the implementation of the hospital discharge policy which

is currently underway. The findings will provide further qualitative insight into the impact of the discharge to assess approach, reviewing 10 systems in various states of maturity. The evaluation is due to report in autumn 2021.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[7197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the number of clinical commissioning groups that have (a) partially or (b) fully decommissioned IVF services; and what steps he is taking to prevent clinical commissioning groups from decommissioning those services.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) sets out clinical guidelines for the provision of fertility services, including in vitro fertilisation.

We have made no such assessment. However, we expect clinical commissioning groups to commission fertility services in line with NICE's guidelines, so that there is equitable access across England.

We have undertaken an internal review of this issue and are currently considering options to address these variations.

■ International Whole Grain Day

Alex Norris:

[\[8725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to mark International Whole Grain Day.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has no current plans to mark International Whole Grain Day.

However, we are aware of the evidence around the role that whole grains can play in contributing to healthier diets and the importance of more sustainable food systems. We are committed through "Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives" to empowering people to make healthier choices about the food they eat.

The Government is developing a Food Strategy White Paper, containing responses to recommendations from Henry Dimbleby's independent review into the food system, which will set out our ambition and direction for food system transformation.

■ Medicine: Education

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[7854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of ensuring that (a) student finance and (b) NHS bursaries are available to people who already have a degree and who wish to study for an undergraduate five-year medicine degree.

Helen Whately:

Student finance and National Health Service bursaries are already available, subject to certain conditions, for people who have a degree and who wish to study for an undergraduate five-year degree in medicine.

Those who wish to undertake a standard five year course in medicine and who already hold an equivalent or higher qualification that does not meet eligibility requirements for a four-year graduate entry medical programme, can apply for a partially means-tested maintenance loan and supplementary grants from Student Finance England (SFE) for the first four years of their course. Students will usually be expected to self-fund their annual tuition fees for those first four years. In year five of their course, they can also apply for a reduced rate, non-means tested maintenance loan from SFE.

Provided these students meet the NHS Business Services Authority eligibility criteria, they can apply for an NHS Bursary for the fifth year of study.

■ Prescription Drugs: Costs**Danny Kruger:****[8790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the costs of (a) unnecessary prescribing or prescribing beyond medical guidance and (b) the consultation that accompanies that prescribing in respect of (i) antidepressants, (ii) opioids, (iii) benzodiazepines, (iv) z-drugs and (v) abapentinoids in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

We have no plans to do so.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges**Emma Hardy:****[8727]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to review the medical conditions exempt from prescription charges to include transplant patients.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has no plans to review or extend the prescription charge medical exemptions list. Around 89% of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge and extensive arrangements are already in place to help people, including transplant patients. To support those with the greatest need who do not qualify for an exemption, they can spread the cost of their prescriptions by purchasing prescription pre-payment certificates. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

■ Primary Health Care: Finance

Alicia Kearns:

[\[8755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make additional funding available to primary care services; and what plans he has to fund the building of additional GP practices.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Long Term Plan, supported by the Government, commits to a record level of additional annual investment in primary medical and community care of an extra £4.5 billion in real terms by 2023/24. Additionally, the Government and NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to at least an additional £1.5 billion cash for general practice from 2020 - 2024 to deliver the manifesto commitments. In response to additional pressures due to the pandemic, we have also made available an additional £270 million funding from November 2020 until September 2021 to ensure general practice can continue to support all patients.

Since 2016 we have invested £800 million in improving primary care estate and technology, on top of 'business as usual' infrastructure funding. Further funding for NHS infrastructure, including how it will be allocated, will be confirmed after the next Spending Review.

■ Respite Care

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[6474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure carers have access to breaks from their caring responsibilities.

Helen Whately:

The Government recognises that access to breaks is important support for carers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Care Act 2014 introduced new rights for carers, for the first time putting them on the same footing as the people for whom they care. They now have legal rights to an assessment of and support for, their needs where eligible.

Day services and other forms of respite care are vital services and we are working with local authorities, in collaboration with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure, where possible, the safe resumption of these services. We have also provided funding through the £1.8 billion Infection Control Fund to support the reopening of day and respite services.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[7760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support unpaid carers by expanding access to respite care.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: We are working with local authorities, in collaboration with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure, where possible, the safe resumption of vital day services and other forms of respite care.

Under current restrictions, day services can continue to meet with up to 30 participants, where formally organised and we have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance for day care managers, commissioners and providers, to help them make decisions on the safe operation of day services. Throughout the pandemic, we have provided almost £1.8 billion in specific funding.

■ Sickle Cell Diseases**Alex Norris:**[\[7925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of patients with sickle cell disease who access emergency care services during a vaso-occlusive crisis.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not available in the format requested. Accident and emergency codes do not record sickle cell disease.

■ Social Services: Fees and Charges**Barbara Keeley:**[\[7134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the High Court Judgement in the case of SH v Norfolk Council, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authority social care charging policies are compliant with equality law.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: Local authorities have discretion to implement charging policies which best meet the needs of the local populations they serve, whilst adhering to legislation and statutory guidance. Responsibility for ensuring that charging policies are compliant with equality laws rests with local authorities, who take their own legal advice on such matters. Following engagement with local authority representative groups, the Government is confident that local authorities understand their obligations.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Anthony Browne:**[\[7296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether funding is available for the costs of (a) covid-19 testing and (b) quarantine for children who are required to travel internationally by custody order.

Jo Churchill:

The Government does not provide funding for travel costs. We offer deferred payment plans and hardship support for people who cannot afford to pay for the cost of managed quarantine and testing up front. In some circumstances this may be available to those who are not in receipt of income related benefits.

Travel: Quarantine**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[4647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government on the expected capacity constraints of the hotel quarantine system and international students from red-list countries who will be required to quarantine.

Liz Saville Roberts:[\[4648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Welsh Government and (b) Cabinet colleagues on developing alternatives to the hotel quarantine system for international students travelling to Wales from red list countries during the covid-19 outbreak, including controlled isolation conditions in university-managed accommodation.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 25 May 2021]: The Department has had regular engagement with the Developed Administrations, including the Welsh Government, throughout our shared response to the global pandemic. This has included policy development with my officials and Ministers also meet regularly with Welsh Government Ministers at the United Kingdom Health Ministers' Forum. This forum discusses a range of topics, including managed quarantine.

We are currently exploring the policy options for international students travelling to the UK for Red-List countries. These discussions have included ensuring the system has the necessary capacity to respond to the potential increased demand from arrivals to the UK, including international students arriving from red-list countries. As we have done throughout this global health emergency, we will continue to take all steps necessary to protect the public and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Imran Hussain:[\[6312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) families and (b) children aged 12 or younger have been required to stay in a managed covid-19 quarantine hotel since February 2021.

Imran Hussain:[\[6313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children of each age have been required to stay in a managed covid-19 quarantine hotel since February 2021.

Imran Hussain: [\[6314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of families who have been required to stay in a managed covid-19 quarantine hotel have received support from social workers since February 2021.

Imran Hussain: [\[6315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of families who have been required to stay in a managed covid-19 quarantine hotel have been referred for additional safeguarding since February 2021.

Imran Hussain: [\[6318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been admitted to hospital whilst staying in a managed covid-19 quarantine hotel since such facilities were opened.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested and to obtain it would incur disproportionate cost.

Imran Hussain: [\[6316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department has provided to families who have been required to stay in a managed covid-19 quarantine hotel.

Jo Churchill:

All managed quarantine hotels provide information about the services and support available, which is set out in a welcome pack provided on arrival. The hotels selected for managed quarantine are able to meet the vast majority of requirements. Hotels will prioritise allocating larger or connecting rooms to families. There are opportunities to exercise outside as arranged with the hotel security guards. Medical and mental health support is provided where needed, together with access to social workers for advice and support.

Food is available throughout the day with a choice of menus accommodating dietary requirements, delivered to the hotel rooms. All rooms have televisions and free WiFi.

■ **Visual Impairment: Children**

Chi Onwurah: [\[8598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Education to support blind children to overcome challenges at (a) home and (b) school.

Helen Whately:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of services to disabled children, including those with sight loss at school and at home. Children with sensory impairments

should be able to access specialist teaching where this is considered necessary to their progress.

HOME OFFICE

■ Immigration Controls: European Economic Area

Neil Coyle:

[\[8620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance has been published to support border officials reviewing and making decisions with respect to people entering eGates from EEA countries.

Kevin Foster:

Border Force does not routinely publish guidance relating to training and operational guidance for Border Force Officers as this would publicise operational practises which in the wrong hands could be used to attempt to evade controls at the UK border and compromise Border security.

Border Force staff receive a comprehensive package of training prior to operational deployment. comprehensive guidance and training plans have been developed and adapted to upskill BF frontline officers in new policy, process and system changes. Initial training is further reinforced and supplemented by on the job mentoring once new staff have been deployed to UK ports.

This comprehensive guidance includes training regarding eGates.

■ Offenders: Deportation

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[7995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to remove foreign national offenders from the UK.

Chris Philp:

The Government is clear foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them.

Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity and since January 2019 we have removed 7,985.

For non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, deportation will be pursued where it is conducive to the public good including where a person receives a custodial sentence of 12 months or more, commits an offence that caused serious harm or is a persistent offender. European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss citizens, and their family members, who are protected by the EU Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020 are considered for deportation on public policy and public security grounds where it concerns conduct (including any criminal convictions relating to it) committed on or before 31 December 2020.

Our New Plan for Immigration will make it easier to deport foreign criminals with no right to be in the UK and keep our citizens safe.

The Home Office publishes data on the number of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) returned from the UK in each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly release](#)'. The latest data, published on 27th May 2021, can be found in tables Ret_02 and Ret_02q of the [returns summary tables](#). The latest data relate to the calendar year 2020.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ **Members: Disciplinary Proceedings**

Sarah Owen:

[7952]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the adequacy of the independence of disciplinary proceedings against hon. Members.

Sir Charles Walker:

Bullying and harassment have no place in Parliament. The Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme was established in July 2018 and covers all members of the parliamentary community, including MPs. There have been two independent reviews of the ICGS since its establishment – the [6-month review](#) and the [18-month review](#). Alison Stanley carried out both reviews, the more recent one concluding in February 2021. Alison Stanley noted in her report in February that there has been much progress on the implementation of the scheme since the 6-month review, but there are still improvements to be made, particularly around the time taken for investigations to conclude. Her review contained 36 recommendations which, when implemented together, will make a significant difference to those who use the scheme.

The ICGS team has already made progress towards implementing these recommendations in important areas such as speeding up investigations, streamlining the ICGS process, smarter policies and processes, improved accessibility and stronger communications.

All ICGS cases against MPs are investigated by members of a pool of independent investigators contracted to work with the House Service, overseen by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, who is herself independent and impartial. The Commissioner reviews the investigator's final report, the accompanying evidence and the investigator's recommendation. If the Commissioner finds that rules have been breached, she can require an apology to the House or, if she feels the sanctions available to her are not sufficient, can refer to the Independent Expert Panel.

[The Independent Expert Panel](#) was established in June 2020; its members were appointed on 25 November following fair and open competition. The Panel is entirely independent, with no MPs taking part in its decisions or able to influence them. It

hears appeals and decides sanctions in ICGS cases where complaints of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct have been brought against MPs. Sanctions could include the suspension or expulsion of an MP, which would then require a vote in the House. To date, it has published four reports on the conduct of MPs.

Sarah Owen:

[\[7953\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, for what reason rules on disciplinary action against hon. Members differ between those applied to decisions made by the Independent Experts Panel and those applied to decisions made by the Standards Committee.

Sir Charles Walker:

The process for a petition under the Recall of MPs Act 2015 is not triggered by a suspension imposed on the recommendation of the Independent Expert Panel. For a recall to be initiated, the sanction must be imposed on the recommendation of the Committee on Standards, or another Committee of the House of Commons concerned with standards of conduct. The Independent Expert Panel is not a Committee of the House of Commons.

Prior to the establishment of the Panel in June 2020, the House of Commons Commission listened to concerns expressed during a consultation process that a recall mechanism would be detrimental in cases brought under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme because of the potential implications for the confidentiality of the process and possibility of retrial by media and the public which could affect the willingness of complainants to come forward.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Overseas Trade: Southern Africa

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[7966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department have taken to increase the volume of trade between the UK and the Southern Africa Customs Union and Mozambique trade bloc.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[7967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department have taken to increase the volume of trade between the UK and the Eastern and Southern Africa trade bloc.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[7970\]](#)

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 The Gambia.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [7976]

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 Rwanda.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [7978]

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 Egypt.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [7984]

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 Ghana.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [8778]

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 Cameroon.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [8779]

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 Côte d'Ivoire.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [8781]

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 Tunisia.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Following extensive engagement, my Department has secured trade deals with Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Tunisia; plus the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) trade bloc; and the Southern Africa Custom Union and Mozambique (SACU+M).

Rwanda and The Gambia currently benefit from the our Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which provides Least Developed Countries with duty-free and quota-free access on all imports except arms and ammunition to the British market. HM Government intends to improve the scheme in order to grow trade with developing countries, supporting economic growth and jobs across the globe and at home. In coming weeks, we will hold a public consultation, to give exporters, businesses and other interested parties the opportunity to provide feedback.

■ **Overseas Trade: Turkey**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [7981]

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 Turkey.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Total trade between the United Kingdom and Turkey was valued at £15.1 billion in 2020. HM Government is taking steps to increase the volume of trade with Turkey, including in areas such as clean growth, technology, automotive and the digital

economy, as well as through the promotion of investment and the resolution of market access barriers.

Following significant engagement last year, the United Kingdom-Turkey Free Trade Agreement was signed on 29th December 2020. It includes a review clause that commits us both to begin discussions on ways to enhance the agreement before the end of 2022, which offers an additional route to develop and grow bilateral trade in the future.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Tim Farron: [\[7770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department plans to take to monitor the potential effect of the UK's proposed free trade deal with Australia on the farming industry (a) before and (b) after negotiations on such a trade deal have been agreed.

Greg Hands:

The Department's economic analysis, published on 17 June 2020, seeks to identify the long-term scale of the additional benefit to the UK from having a deal with Australia. This included an assessment of the impact on the agriculture industry.

Following the conclusion of negotiations, the Government will update this analysis and publish a full impact assessment prior to ratification of the agreement.

HM Government has been clear that any deal with Australia must work for UK consumers, producers, and companies, and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards. HM Government will also stand firm in our negotiations to ensure any future trade deal supports the livelihoods of farmers and the interests of consumers across the UK.

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[7990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on securing a free trade agreement with Australia.

Greg Hands:

The Australian Minister for Trade, Dan Tehan, visited the UK on 22nd – 23rd April to meet my Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and me face-to-face, for the first time since his appointment in December. Over the course of two days of intensive discussions, the UK and Australia reached consensus on most elements of a comprehensive free trade agreement, including ambitious provisions on services, innovation and mobility. Australia is set to liberalise tariffs on UK goods, from sparkling wine, to cars, to pottery.

Both countries are confident that the remaining issues will be resolved, and are now working to agree the outstanding elements with the aim of reaching agreement in principle later this month.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[7993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made towards a free trade agreement with the US.

Greg Hands:

The Government has had five rounds of negotiations so far. Almost all chapter areas are now in the advanced stages of talks, and a significant proportion of legal text has been agreed across multiple chapters.

The US is currently reviewing the progress made in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), so far, following the appointment of the United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai. The Government has been engaging constructively on the way the FTA can align with both countries' commitments to Building Back Better.

An ambitious UK-US FTA can support transatlantic collaboration rebuilding from Covid-19, promoting sustainable and clean growth and women's economic empowerment, while setting global standards in digital trade and protecting intellectual property.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Trade Agreements: Parliamentary Scrutiny

Tim Farron:

[\[7772\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on facilitating parliamentary scrutiny of proposed trade deals with other countries before they are signed.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

I have regular discussions with members of the Cabinet. The Government has put a number of arrangements in place to allow for proper scrutiny of proposed trade deals with other countries by Parliament. This includes publishing negotiating objectives and economic scoping assessments before starting negotiations; regular statements to Parliament and briefings with Members and relevant Parliamentary Committees during negotiations.

At the conclusion of negotiations, there will be opportunity for scrutiny of a final deal and Parliament can resolve against ratification of a treaty under the scrutiny processes set out under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. Any legislative changes required to give effect to a Free Trade Agreement will need to be scrutinised and passed by Parliament in the usual way before ratification of the agreement can take place.

TRANSPORT**■ Driving Tests**

Royston Smith: [7872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of available practical driving tests.

Royston Smith: [7873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) advice and (b) support his Department is providing to people who are unable to book practical driving tests due to limited availability.

Royston Smith: [7874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of practical driving tests appointments available each week; and what comparative assessment he has made of that data and the availability of tests before the covid-19 outbreak.

Royston Smith: [7875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the backlog of people waiting to take their practical driving tests as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has put in place a number of measures to increase practical driving tests. These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays). The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners. The aim is to increase testing capacity and reduce the backlog as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a COVID-secure service for customers and examiners.

As of 24 May 2021, there were nationally circa 140,000 practical car tests still available to book over the next 24 weeks.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) advises candidates to look for earlier dates by checking the 'change your driving test' service at: www.gov.uk/change-driving-test. The service is live and additional tests are added when they become available. Cancellations are also returned to the system by other candidates who often reschedule their test at short notice, freeing up test appointments for others to book. The DVSA also advises candidates to check availability at other nearby test centres.

As of 24 May 2021, there are, on average, 30,000 practical car driving test appointments available each week. This is compared to, on average, 33,000 available tests each week pre-March 2020.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is currently only able to deliver a maximum of 6 tests, per examiner, each day. Out of hours tests are limited to weekends only. When the service returns to 7 tests a day, the DVSA will be able to reintroduce evening tests. The aim is that an increase in test slots, together with an increase in examiners, will see the number of available weekly test slots exceed that of pre-March 2020.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Driving Tests

Stephen Crabb: [\[7768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the size of the backlog of HGV driving tests.

Stephen Crabb: [\[7769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle the backlog of HGV driving tests.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has put in place a number of measures to increase driving tests. These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays). The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners. The aim is to increase testing capacity and reduce the backlog as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a COVID-secure service for customers and examiners.

■ Passenger Ships

Jackie Doyle-Price: [\[7804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on a UK-wide restart of the ocean cruise sector from 17 May 2021.

Jackie Doyle-Price: [\[7805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the devolved Administrations on a UK-wide restart of the ocean cruise sector from 17 May 2021.

Robert Courts:

My Department engages regularly with the devolved administrations on the UK-wide restart of the cruise sector through monthly official-led cruise restart meetings. We seek an aligned UK-wide approach wherever possible on international travel. We continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government, and Northern Ireland Executive to put in place clear rules and guidance to help keep people safe.

■ Railway Stations: Safety

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhési:

[\[8708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the station roof collapse at Northwich station, whether he has received recent assurances on the structural integrity of railway station roofs.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail advises that it does not report on station maintenance directly to the Department for Transport or the Transport Secretary.

However, Network Rail does report on its compliance with its agreed standards to the independent safety regulator, the Office of Rail and Road. The Office of Rail and Road reports on Network Rail's compliance in its annual health and safety assessment.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhési:

[\[8709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how regularly railway station roofs are inspected for safety.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail advises that visual inspections take place every twelve months and detailed inspections every five years with additional examinations as necessary.

■ Railways: Tickets

Feryal Clark:

[\[7964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the creation of Great British Railways on tickets prices for commuters using National Rail lines in Enfield North constituency.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 20th May, government published Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail – a blueprint for a more customer focused, reliable and growing railway. The biggest reform and simplification of our railways in 30 years will bring “track and train” together under single national leadership in a new public body – Great British Railways – accountable to ministers. Great British Railways will own the infrastructure, collect fare revenue, run and plan the network, set the timetable and most fares.

TREASURY

■ Public Sector: Pay

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[8752\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a copy of the letter sent by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and

Industrial Strategy, dated 12 February 2021 on the scope and extent of the public sector pay pause.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[8753\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when and for what reasons the decision was taken to include nuclear decommissioning workers working on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority estate within the scope of the public sector pay pause.

Steve Barclay:

As set out by the Chancellor at the 2020 Spending Review, it is right that public sector pay reflects the economic context. The private sector has been significantly impacted by the Coronavirus in the form of suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies. In order to ensure parity and fairness it is right to temporarily pause pay awards in the public sector as we assess the impact Coronavirus has had on the wider economy and labour market.

There are set exemptions for those working in the NHS and individuals earning less than median earnings of £24,000. For fairness and consistency, the pause applies to all public sector employers save for the exemptions outlined. This includes the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the relevant subsidiaries that are classified as public sector by the Office for National Statistics.

The only circumstances when employers should consider departing from the pay pause is when they are able to secure negotiated workforce reforms that are contingent on offering a higher pay award and deliver sustainable and cashable savings for the organisation.

Whilst there is an inherent public interest in transparency and accountability of public authorities like the Treasury, it is important that Ministers are able to discuss issues frankly and openly without fear of release. If Ministerial discussion is inhibited by the prospect of release, the quality of debate is likely to be restricted, which would not be in the public interest.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ LGBT People: Business

Stephen Farry:

[\[7985\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to her oral contribution at the Women and Equalities Committee on 25 May 2021 on the Role of the Government Equalities Office, where she stated that we're also working hard with business to ensure there is support for LGBT people in business, particularly in small businesses, if she will publish a list of those businesses with whom she and officials of the Government Equalities Office have met.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government Equalities Office has engaged widely with employers across the UK to understand the experiences of LGBT employees in different sectors, meeting

representatives from over 150 businesses during 2019/20 to share experiences on making workplaces genuinely LGBT-inclusive.

In March 2021, for example, the Minister for Women and Equalities met with a number of self-employed and SME businesses to discuss their personal experiences, and thoughts on best practice for promoting LGBT equality at work.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Personal Independence Payment: Epilepsy

Kirsten Oswald:

[10437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with epilepsy receive (a) the daily living component and (b) the mobility component of the personal independence payment.

Justin Tomlinson:

The latest available data on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims with entitlement which can be split by Daily Living and Mobility award status and by main disabling condition can be found at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

'Epilepsy' is found under the disability category 'Neurological disease'.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>.

■ Tribunals: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[10459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with HM Court and Tribunals Service on the restart of face to face tribunals.

Justin Tomlinson:

Face to face appeal hearings have restarted. Decisions on whether appeal hearings are to be done face to face are made by tribunal judges based on the appellant's circumstances and/or the nature of the decision under appeal.

■ Universal Credit

Ms Karen Buck:

[8533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to universal credit claimant feedback in the file entitled 54. I - Paper BTL02 – UC Claimants: In Their Own Words, reviewed by the Universal Credit Programme Board at its meeting on 21 March 2019, whether she plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of the provision of non-digital options for people to manage their universal credit claims.

Mims Davies:

For those claimants who are unable to access or use our digital services, there is already assistance available to make and maintain their Universal Credit claim using the Freephone Universal Credit helpline.

Throughout the pandemic, Jobcentres have remained open for anyone who needed face-to-face support and could not be helped in any other way. Since 12 April 2021, Jobcentres in England and Wales have resumed full face to face services, returning to normal opening hours from 9am to 5pm. Jobcentres in Scotland have restarted the same full face to face service since 26 April 2021. All Jobcentre Plus offices across the country have Wi-Fi and computers available for claimants to access the internet.

Ms Karen Buck:[\[8534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to universal credit claimant feedback entitled 54. I - Paper BTL02 – UC Claimants: In Their Own Words reviewed by the Universal Credit Programme Board at its meeting on 21 March 2019, whether she plans to make an assessment of the adequacy of universal credit for people unable to work due to their health condition or disability.

Justin Tomlinson:

There is no objective way of deciding what an adequate level of benefit should be as every-one has different requirements. In addition to being eligible to claim non-means tested benefits, such as PIP and DLA, disabled people can receive Universal Credit to support them with their living costs. Couples, where one is working and one has limited capability for work or work related activity, may also be eligible to claim childcare costs. The Universal Credit rate for the most severely disabled people, the limited capability for work and work related activity (LCWRA) addition, is more than double the equivalent rate for the Employment and Support Allowance support group. Our upcoming Health and Disability Green Paper will explore how we can go even further to support disabled people and those with health conditions now and in the future.

■ Universal Credit: Mental Illness**Jessica Morden:**[\[7766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of research by the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, published 26 May 2021, on the barriers facing people with mental health issues from getting help to manage their universal credit account.

Mims Davies:

Universal Credit provides personalised and tailored support for all claimants, and it is already possible for claimants to give permission for a third party to discuss aspects of their claim.

The Department has also provided mental health training for staff who have direct contact with claimants, including all Work Coaches, to equip them to identify mental wellbeing issues or vulnerabilities, and to take appropriate action to support

individuals. Work Coaches will tailor support to the needs of the individual and work closely with local organisations that provide additional specialist support. To enable Work Coaches to provide that tailored experience, with the permission of the claimant, they are able to record, in a free text format, through the use of 'pinned notes' in the Universal Credit system, information which supports staff in identifying and managing relevant experiences and circumstances of individual claimants.

In terms of supporting people manage their Universal Credit account, there is assistance available to make and maintain their Universal Credit claim using the Freephone Universal Credit helpline.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY****■ Upholding Employment Rights****Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully):** [\[HCWS72\]](#)

I am pleased to announce the latest steps the Government is taking today to better protect and enforce workers' rights, as we look to build back better from Covid-19.

Firstly, the Government has today published its response to our 2019 consultation on creating a single enforcement body for employment rights. This Government has been absolutely clear that we will do whatever we can to protect and enhance workers' rights, and this new body will help the country build back better by taking a smarter approach to the enforcement of employment law.

Today's response to the consultation sets out the overarching details of the new body. Responsibility for tackling modern slavery, enforcing the minimum wage and protecting agency workers – currently spread across the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate and HMRC – will be brought under one roof, creating a comprehensive new authority.

This "one-stop-shop" approach will help improve enforcement through better co-ordination and pooling of intelligence, and providing a single, recognisable port of call for workers so they know their rights and can blow the whistle on bad behaviour. It will also make it easier for the vast majority of responsible businesses to do the right thing by their employees by providing clear guidance on their obligations.

Our consultation response also confirms that we will extend state enforcement to cover holiday pay and statutory sick pay for vulnerable workers and will regulate umbrella companies. The new body will also enforce financial penalties against organisations that do not meet requirements to publish modern slavery statements, as well as run the unpaid tribunal awards penalty scheme.

Protecting workers requires both support for business – so employers understand how to comply – as well as effective, visible enforcement action to deter irresponsible employers from undercutting the vast majority who want to do right by their workers. The body will have a spectrum of powers and responsibilities to achieve this, including compliance notices and civil penalties, as well as the power to prosecute.

The single enforcement body will be delivered through primary legislation and is the latest initiative in this Government's wider efforts to protect workers' rights. In the last year alone, the Government has boosted the minimum wage for around two million employees, protected furloughed workers' parental pay, cracked down on restrictive employment contracts, and more.

Secondly, as well as modernising our enforcement regime, the Government is today publishing its consultation responses on bringing the Certification Officer in line with other regulators; these reforms will implement technical measures passed by Parliament via the Trade Union Act 2016, providing reassurance to union members and the wider public.

Our reforms will make the Certification Officer a more effective regulator, with powers and funding more in line with similar bodies. They will give the Certification Officer the power to proactively investigate issues without having to wait for complaints from union members, the power to issue financial penalties, and put their office on a more sustainable model of levy funding. This proper and fair regulation will ensure all trade unions and employers' associations conduct themselves to the highest standards.

Thirdly, I wanted to update you on the publication today by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service of their report into 'fire and rehire' and the Government's response to the evidence it provides. I have asked Acas to produce better, more comprehensive guidance to help employers explore all options before considering dismissal and re-engagement.

This Government has always been clear that we do not accept fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic. Workers up and down the country have worked flat out during the pandemic, carrying out essential work to keep our economy going. It is crucial that employers take their responsibilities seriously and act appropriately when it comes to discussions about changing employment contracts.

The report shows that the practice of 'fire and rehire' includes instances where it has been threatened but not implemented, as well as companies dismissing and re-engaging employees. It is neither a new phenomenon nor is it concentrated in a particular sector or type of employer. While there is no quantitative data, there is a sense that 'fire and rehire' had become more prevalent in the years before COVID as well as during the pandemic.

This is clearly a complex issue and we understand that sometimes, regrettably, employment negotiations will fail. In these circumstances, employers may feel they need to dismiss staff, and potentially re-engage them.

However, the Government wants to send a crystal clear message to employers that all options must be exhausted before considering dismissal and reengagement of staff. It is unacceptable to use the threat of 'fire and rehire' as a negotiation tactic to force through changes to employment contracts.

The United Kingdom has one of the best records on workers' rights in the world - going further than the EU in many areas – and we are determined to build on this progress. By protecting workers more extensively, supporting business to comply with the law, and preventing them from being undercut by a minority of irresponsible employers, we can continue to be a high-wage, high-employment economy that works for everyone as we build back better.

The geographic scope of the bodies being subsumed into the single enforcement body vary; the Certification Officer's geographic coverage applies to Great Britain (there is a separate Certification Officer for Northern Ireland).

I will place copies of the Government response to Single Enforcement Body consultation, the Government response to the Certification Officer Levy consultation and Government response to the Certification Officer Enforcement Powers consultation in the Libraries of the House.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition

Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith): [\[HCWS75\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that the UK Government is today launching a civic honours competition to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. This includes competitions for city status and Lord Mayor (or Provost) status.

City status and Lord Mayor (or Provost) status are civic honours granted by The Queen acting on the advice of Her ministers under the Royal Prerogative. The granting of both city status and Lord Mayor (or Provost) status are purely honorific and come with no additional funding or powers. Since the 1970s, these awards have been granted through competitions and are usually held to coincide with Jubilee years, most recently for Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Entry guidelines and an application form have been published on GOV.UK. In their applications, local authorities are being asked to give particular reference to their area's:

- Distinct identity;
- Civic pride;
- Cultural infrastructure, interesting heritage, history and traditions;
- Vibrant and welcoming community;
- Record of innovation;
- Sound governance and administration;
- Associations with Royalty; and
- Other particularly distinctive features, age, residents or communities who have made widely recognised significant contributions to society and cultural infrastructure.

All local authorities across the United Kingdom who believe that their town or city deserves consideration for these rare honours are invited to apply. The city status competition will also be open to eligible applications from the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

The guidelines specify a standard format for entries. Local authorities are urged to use the standard format, which is intended to limit the costs of entering the competition and to introduce a fair basis for comparison between entries. The closing date is 8 December 2021.

The honours will continue to be rare marks of distinction conferred, on Ministerial advice, under the Royal prerogative, rather than rights to be earned by the meeting of specific criteria. All valid entries will receive individual consideration on their merits and the Government looks forward to announcing the results of the competitions in 2022.

EDUCATION

■ Education Update

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):

[HCWS70]

The pandemic and its associated restrictions and disruptions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning, evidenced in recent research from the Education Policy Institute.

Last week I announced the details of the next step in our efforts to make sure children and young people catch up, as part of our ongoing education recovery plans.

A further £1.4bn will be made available to support education recovery for children aged 2 to 19 in schools, colleges and early years settings, focussing on two areas where the evidence is clear our investment will have significant impact: **high quality tutoring and great teaching.**

This further instalment is the third major recovery intervention in the past year, building on the £1.7bn already announced bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3bn. This forms part of the wider response to help pupils make up their learning over the course of this Parliament.

New measures include:

£1 billion for tutoring

- To support those most impacted by the pandemic, particularly disadvantaged students, we will radically expand tutoring to provide up to **100 million hours of tuition for 5-19 year olds by 2024**. This will expand high-quality tutoring in every part of country so that small group tuition is available to those children who need help catching up – not just the most affluent.
- In schools, we will provide up to **6 million tutoring courses for 5-16 year olds by 2024**. Children in receipt of tutoring will receive up to 15 sessions of small group or individual tuition to support them to catch up in subjects such as maths or science, delivered by a trained professional or member of school staff outside of their normal lessons. One course of high-quality tutoring has been proven to boost attainment by three to five months, so tutoring will be vital for young people in recovering the teaching hours lost in the last year.
- For 16-19 year olds, we will extend the 16-19 tuition fund for a further two years. Over the coming three academic years, funding will be provided to support the

equivalent of **2 million 15-hour courses** to accelerate the progression of lower attaining students. Collectively 16-19 students will receive up to 32 million hours of small group tuition over the three years.

£400m for teaching

- £253m new funding to provide **500,000 teacher training opportunities for teachers** to access world-leading training appropriate for whatever point they are at in their career, from new teachers to headteachers through extending the rollout of the Early Career Framework and middle- and late-career National Professional Qualification.
- £153m new funding to provide training for **early years staff** to support the very youngest children's learning and development. This will involve rolling out new training programmes so that early years staff are supported to help young children with their speech and language skills as well as their physical and emotional development. We will also provide additional support and expert advice for nurseries and other settings implementing our early years reforms, which will reduce teachers' workloads so they can spend more time supporting children's development.

To ensure that those with the least time left do not miss out, providers of 16-19 education will have the option of offering students in year 13 [or equivalent] the opportunity to repeat up to one more year if they have been particularly severely affected by the pandemic.

The government has committed to an ambitious, long-term education recovery plan and the next stage will include a review of time spent in school and college and the impact this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of the review will be set later in the year to inform the spending review.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Government response to the Benyon Review**

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice): [\[HCWS71\]](#)

In 2019 the Government commissioned Richard Benyon to conduct a review of the potential role for Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). HPMAs are similar to the Marine Conservation Zones already established. However, there is strict protection with a presumption against any activity involving extraction, destruction or deposition being permitted in those areas and strict protections on other damaging activities. The review reported last year in June 2020.

The Benyon Review concluded that HPMAs would have an important role in helping the marine ecosystem recover. It concluded that there could be spill over benefits for marine life in adjacent areas to highly protected areas. The review recommended that the

Government pilot around five HPMA's to test the proposition further and test delivery. It also recommended that some or all of the pilot sites could be co-located with existing Marine Protected Areas such as Marine Conservation Zones, in effect to upgrade the status of some of those sites.

Today is World Ocean Day when, across the globe, people are taking action to protect and recover our global ocean. This Government is committed to ocean conservation and leaving our environment in a better state than we found it, including the marine environment. I would like to thank Lord Benyon and the panel for their work on the Review, and the broad range of stakeholders who contributed to it. The Government welcomes the report and accepts the central recommendation that we should take forward some pilot sites.

Defra will begin introducing HPMA's by identifying a number of locations within English waters to pilot our approach. These may be inside or outside the existing Marine Protected Area network, and in inshore or offshore areas, recognising that HPMA's must be in the locations best able to deliver protection and recovery.

However, the Government recognises that the strict protections implied by HPMA's will cause some concerns with other sea users. In particular, the fishing industry will be concerned about further displacement from fishing grounds when they are already being excluded from some areas earmarked for offshore wind energy development.

We recognise that there is a balance in supporting sustainable industries in the marine environment while increasing marine protection to ensure a healthy, resilient and diverse marine ecosystem. In developing our response to the Review we have engaged with a broad range of stakeholders. We will develop criteria for HPMA identification and create a list of potential sites this year, followed by designations of a number of sites in 2022. We will also set out how we will work with stakeholders, the governance and management of sites and how we will monitor and evaluate sites.

The Benyon Review did not cover Scottish and Welsh waters but did include Northern Ireland's offshore waters. We understand that DAERA wishes to have executive competence transferred to it in relation to certain marine functions, including designation and management of MPAs, in Northern Ireland offshore waters. Amendments to the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 made by the Fisheries Act 2020 allow DAERA to make orders to protect the marine environment from fishing activities in the offshore region. We therefore do not propose identifying any of the initial HPMA's in offshore Northern Ireland waters.

Copies of the Government Response are being placed in the Libraries of the House.

HOME OFFICE**■ Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in High-rise Residential Buildings Consultation**

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse): [\[HCWS73\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Greenhalgh) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today, the Government publishes a new consultation on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in High-rise Residential Buildings which will be open from 8 June to 19 July 2021.

This new consultation contains proposals to implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report recommendations on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in high-rise residential buildings. These recommendations require a change in law to place new requirements on owners or managers of multi-occupied high-rise residential buildings.

This consultation supports delivery of two of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations and is part of the government's package of reforms to improve building and fire safety in all regulated premises where people live, stay or work.

We are consulting on the following proposals:

- Proposal 1: We propose to require the Responsible Person to prepare a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for every resident who self-identifies to them as unable to self-evacuate (subject to the resident's voluntary self-identification) and to do so in consultation with them.
- Proposal 2: We propose to provide a template to assist the Responsible Person and the residents in completing the plan, and to support consistency at a national level.
- Proposal 3: We propose to require the Responsible Person to complete and keep up to date information about residents in their building who would have difficulty self-evacuating in the event of a fire (and who have voluntarily self-identified as such), and to place it in an information box on the premises to assist effective evacuation during a rescue by the fire service.
- Proposal 4: We propose, in order to assist the Responsible Person and support consistency at a national level, to provide a template, most likely in a one-page format, to capture the key information to be provided in the information box.

Further details can be found in the consultation and its supportive documents available at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/personal-emergency-evacuation-plans. A copy of the consultation will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Office for Nuclear Regulation: Corporate Plan 2021/2022**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman): [\[HCWS76\]](#)

My Noble Friend, The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions (The Baroness Stedman-Scott) has made the following Written Statement.

Today I will lay before this House the Office for Nuclear Regulation Corporate Plan 2021/2022. This document will also be published on the ONR website.

I can confirm, in accordance with Schedule 7, Section 25(3) of the Energy Act 2013, that there have been no exclusions to the published documents on the grounds of national security.

■ Taking Action on Climate Change

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman): [\[HCWS74\]](#)

The UK was the first G7 country to legislate for net-zero and it will be the first to legislate for the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures – ensuring we tackle climate change and deliver safer, better and greener pensions.

Today I have laid the draft Occupational Pension Schemes (Climate Change Governance and Reporting) Regulations 2021. These regulations are world-leading and will embed the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures into UK law.

Climate change is an existential challenge to our environment, but not only that, it poses a systematic financial risk and threat to the long-term sustainability of UK pensions. With almost £2 trillion in assets under management, all occupational pension schemes are exposed to climate-related risks – which could have a detrimental impact on their members' future retirement income. Pushing forward our drive for greener pensions, I consulted on detailed requirements to allow more effective governance of climate risks and disclosure in line with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures' recommendations in August last year. Further consultation on draft regulations took place earlier this year. We have worked directly with industry throughout this process, recognising widespread acceptance across the sector for the principle of more effective action on climate risk. The government laid the legislative groundwork for these regulations in the Pension Schemes Act 2021.

These regulations will deliver world-leading change to the pensions industry, ensuring trustees identify, assess and manage climate-related risks and opportunities relevant to their pension scheme. As a result of our work, the vast majority of pension schemes members' savings will be invested in schemes whose trustees have a specific legal duty to actively consider the risks and opportunities a transition to a low carbon economy brings.

I have taken the decision not to include a review clause in the regulations, invoking section 28(2)(b) of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015. I recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluating the initial impact of our regulations, that is why I have committed publicly in our consultation response to undertake a review in 2023. This will cover all the aspects normally required by a statutory review clause.