



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 9 June 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:40 P.M., 09 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carers: Leave

Greg Clark:

[\[10286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish a response to the consultation on carer's leave, which closed on 3 August 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to delivering the manifesto commitment to introduce a new right of an additional week of leave for unpaid carers.

The consultation on Carer's Leave ran from March to August 2020, setting out detailed policy proposals to create a new employment right for one week's unpaid leave. The consultation received a significant number of responses, demonstrating the importance of this issue.

The Government response to the consultation will be published in due course, setting out the way forward.

■ Climate Change

Ed Davey:

[\[10149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the International Energy Agency's report entitled Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector, published in May 2021, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle the (a) social and (b) economic effects on people and communities of achieving the UK's climate change targets.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

People from all over the UK are already doing their bit on climate change, and, with the Together for our Planet campaign, we aim to celebrate this and inspire even more of our fellow citizens to join them. The Government is already supporting people to adapt to new lower carbon technologies with initiatives such as Go Ultra Low and the Simple Energy Advice service.

On economic effects, we are determined to seize the once-in-a-generation economic opportunities of the net zero transition by creating new business opportunities and supporting up to 2 million green jobs by 2030 across all regions of the UK. HM Treasury will publish in full its Net Zero Review this Spring, and has already published an interim report. The review will set out how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded, and where the costs will fall.

In order to ensure we have the skilled workforce to deliver net zero, we have launched the Green Jobs Taskforce, working in partnership with business, skills

providers and unions, to help us develop plans for new long-term good quality, green jobs by 2030. The Government will make sure that our growing green economy is inclusive, benefitting people across the UK, supporting workers as industries transform and ensuring costs as well as the benefits are shared fairly, protecting consumers, workers and businesses.

■ Companies: Codes of Practice

Ed Davey:

[10148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Code's comply or explain regime.

Paul Scully:

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) is responsible for the UK Corporate Governance Code. The FRC reviews the quality of reporting annually. The most recent review was published in November 2020 ([Review of Corporate Governance Reporting](#)) and assessed reporting of a sample of 100 companies in the FTSE350. This was followed by the publication in February 2021 of a report "[Improving the quality of 'comply or explain' reporting](#)" which encouraged companies to offer better transparency when departing from Code Provisions, and set out the elements to be included within a good quality explanation.

The FRC also works with independent organisations to research specific areas of reporting. This year two reports have been issued, one on remuneration reporting (May 2021) undertaken by the University of Portsmouth and the second an assessment of workforce engagement (June 2021) undertaken by Royal Holloway, University of London and the Involvement and Participation Association.

All these reports demonstrate areas of innovation, good practice and improved transparency by companies following the Code.

■ Environment Protection: Job Creation

Virginia Crosbie:

[10708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to create well paid and quality green jobs to level up opportunities in the UK; and what assessment he has made of the potential number of such new jobs to be created in (a) Wales and (b) Ynys Môn constituency.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are determined to seize the once-in-a-generation economic opportunities of the net zero transition by creating new business opportunities and, by one estimate, supporting up to 2 million green jobs by 2030 across all regions of the UK. The UK has a strong base to build upon, in 2019 there were already over 410,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country.

Through the Ten Point Plan, we will support a further 90,000 green collar jobs across the UK by 2024, and up to 250,000 by 2030. The Plan announced that we will invest

up to £1 billion to support the establishment of carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) in at least two industrial clusters by the mid-2020s, and four by 2030 at the latest, creating 'SuperPlaces' in areas potentially including south Wales. The UK Community Renewal Fund will also provide £220 million of additional funding over 2021-22, to better support people and communities in need across the whole of the UK, including Wales.

In order to ensure we have the skilled workforce to deliver net zero and our Ten Point Plan, we have launched the Green Jobs Taskforce. The Taskforce will conclude its work in summer 2021, with the actions feeding into our Net Zero Strategy to be published later in the year.

■ Fossil Fuels: Finance

Ed Davey:

[\[10150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the International Energy Agency's report entitled Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector, published in May 2021, what steps his Department is taking to cease investment in new fossil fuel projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As of 31 March 2021, the UK Government no longer provides any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, other than in limited circumstances, and is aligning its support to enable clean energy exports. The UK Government does not subsidise fossil fuel projects domestically.

As we move towards net-zero, oil and gas will play a smaller role in meeting UK energy demand. However, it will continue to play an important role. The independent Climate Change Committee has recognised the ongoing demand for oil and natural gas, including it in all scenarios it proposed for how the UK meets its target for achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Even with continued licensing, the UK is expected to remain a net importer of oil and gas in the coming decades. This is because UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) production is declining rapidly as the basin matures, and fields being brought online at this stage in the UKCS' maturity are generally small in comparison to elsewhere in the world. An orderly transition, underpinned by oil and gas, is therefore crucial to maintaining our energy security of supply.

Our review into the future of offshore oil and gas licensing concluded that a formal climate compatibility checkpoint, building on current practice, should be established. This will help ensure that any future licences are only awarded on the basis that they are aligned with the government's broad climate change ambitions, including the UK's target of reaching net zero by 2050. This checkpoint will be designed by the end of 2021 and will allow for an orderly transition, underpinned by ongoing production of oil and gas as long as we still require it domestically, while the sector increasingly bears down on its production emissions, and pivots to support the energy transition.

■ Green Deal Scheme: Appeals

Peter Grant: [\[10483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Deal appeal cases are due to be processed.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As of 7 June, the Department has a total of 334 cases for review by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State under the Green Deal Framework Regulations.

■ Space Technology

Owen Thompson: [\[10512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a timetable for the delivery of the national space strategy, announced in the Queen's speech on 19 December 2019.

Amanda Solloway:

This Government is committed to making the UK a global science and technology superpower. This will be achieved through the UK's first comprehensive national space strategy that unleashes growth and innovation in the UK space sector. The strategy will be published in due course.

■ UK Space Agency

Owen Thompson: [\[10513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) priorities and (b) policy objectives of the strategy delivery team in the UK Space Agency have been since January 2021.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK Space Agency is working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Defence to publish a cross-government National Space Strategy this summer. The strategy will unleash growth and innovation in the UK space sector and ensure that the UK has access to the technology needed to address our needs from space. The UK Space Agency sets its strategic objectives and priorities to deliver Government's space ambitions annually in its corporate plan.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Ajax Vehicles: Infrastructure and Projects Authority

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[10192\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the his Department mandated the Infrastructure Projects Authority to report on Ajax.

Julia Lopez:

The IPA's Mandate requires the IPA to support the successful delivery of Government's Major Programmes and Projects projects by providing independent reviews at key decision points in the life-cycle of a Project. These reviews advise and support the project delivery organisation in achieving delivery of the project.

IPA Reviews do not offer external commentary on progress of Programmes or Projects for publication. They are conducted by independent, qualified and accredited reviewers. The reports are confidential and are exempt from publication under sections 33, 35, 41 and 43 of the FOI Act. Transparent information about the delivery of Government's major projects can be accessed through The IPA's Annual Report.

■ Civil Servants: Location**Alicia Kearns:**[\[8754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to identify rural areas with strong transport connections to urban centres as suitable locations for the Places for Growth programme.

Julia Lopez:

Places for Growth was established to contribute towards the government's levelling up aims and commits to relocating 22,000 civil service roles from central London to the regions and nations of the UK by the end of the decade.

Departments will decide on their locations taking into account a range of factors including their specific operating models, workforce and location analysis.

Departments will select places that they judge to have the skills, transport links and capacity to meet their needs and flourish in their chosen locations as well as ensuring locations are suitable for the long term success and sustainability of the civil service.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity**Cat Smith:**[\[7858\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1107 on Elections: Proof of Identity, whether a voter's photographic ID will need to match the address where they are registered to vote in order to be valid.

Julia Lopez:

Showing proof of identification is something people of all walks of life already do everyday. It is a reasonable and proportionate approach to extend this practice to voting and give the public confidence that their vote is theirs, and theirs alone.

Of the broad range of documents that will be accepted, including, for example, various concessionary travel passes, Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) cards, and photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme, many do not contain a voter's address. An address will not need to be included on identification in order to vote. In addition, expired photographic identification will be

accepted as long as the photograph is of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[8769\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of providing voter cards to people with no other form of photographic document for identification purposes.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[8770\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish a full list of the forms of photographic identification that will be acceptable for Voter ID.

Julia Lopez:

As legislation is brought forward to enable the national roll out of voter identification, appropriate impact assessments, which include information on costs, will be provided for Parliament in the normal way.

The list of approved photographic identification will not be limited to passports and driving licences. A broad range of documents will be accepted, including, for example, various concessionary travel passes, Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) cards and photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme. The full list of accepted photographic identification will be made available in due course.

■ **Joint Consultative Working Group: Trade Unions**

Stephen Farry: [\[8788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to include representation from trade unions on the Joint Consultative Working Group in respect of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Stephen Farry: [\[8789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will set out the proposed membership of the Joint Consultative Working Group in relation to the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG) is an official level group and Article 15(2) of the Northern Ireland Protocol establishes that the JCWG shall be composed of representatives of the United Kingdom and the European Union.

The Group's rules of procedure set out that, where appropriate and by decision of the co-chairs, experts or other persons who are not members of delegations may be invited to attend meetings of the JCWG in order to provide information on a particular subject. This has not been necessary so far.

■ Military Decorations

Ian Blackford:

[\[8632\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the status is of the submission on behalf of the Campaign for the Harmonisation of Criteria for Both Versions of the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal which was received by AMSC, SW1A 2HQ, on 15 January 2021.

Julia Lopez:

The assessment of historic medals claims is a matter for the independent Advisory Military Sub-Committee (AMSC). Campaigners can be assured their case is under review and recommendations will be made as soon as possible.

■ MyCSP: Shares

John McDonnell:

[\[7727\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government sold its shares in MyCSP for; and what the current value is of MyCSP.

Julia Lopez:

When MyCSP was created as a mutual joint venture in 2012, the Cabinet Office owned 35%, Equiniti 40% and an Employee Benefit Trust 25%.

In 2014, the Cabinet Office sold 11% of MyCSP to Equiniti for £8 million.

In 2018, the Cabinet Office sold its remaining 24% stake to Equiniti for £8 million.

As the Cabinet Office no longer has a stake in MyCSP, we do not have a valuation of it.

■ Sovereignty: Scotland

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[10245\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which team in his Department is responsible for arrangements for Scottish people to demonstrate their (a) consent and (b) opposition to the Union; and what the work priorities of that team are for 2021.

Julia Lopez:

The Cabinet Office is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the Union. The UK Government's full focus is on ensuring the whole of the United Kingdom overcomes the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has created, including helping our NHS, our schools and our economic recovery. These are challenges that all parts of the UK face and our collective priority must be to tackle them together.

COP26**■ Developing Countries: Climate Change**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[900925\]](#)

What steps he is taking to raise international ambition to address the climate vulnerability of small island developing states ahead of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are committed to working in partnership with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to keep 1.5 alive and deliver the Paris Agreement goals.

To better support those already experiencing climate impacts, the UK has committed to doubling our climate finance. We are calling on others to follow our lead.

We are amplifying the voices of SIDS and continue to drive action on their priorities - including through our hosting of the Climate & Development Ministerial, co-chairing of the NDC Partnership, and leadership of the Adaptation Action Coalition.

■ Financial Services and Procurement: Environment Protection

Virginia Crosbie: [\[10712\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking with global partners to ensure (a) food and commodity supply chains are environmentally responsible (b) that the finance industry is bound by net-zero and the Paris Agreement targets.

Alok Sharma:

The Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue is critical to ensuring supply chains are environmentally responsible. This is a ground-breaking partnership between producer and consumer countries committed to taking action to transition to more sustainable commodity production and global trade. Building on the Just Rural Transition Initiative, we also aim to build momentum for policy action, innovation, and investment for sustainable agriculture and food systems, particularly through the 'Transition to Sustainable Agriculture' Policy Dialogue.

On the finance industry, the UK is implementing a framework for embedding climate into every financial decision and creating a more sustainable financial system to support the path to net zero. The agenda for private finance can be seen [here](#).

In addition, we have now launched the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ), which brings together over 160 firms (together responsible for assets in excess of \$70 trillion) from the leading net zero initiatives across the financial system. GFANZ will work to mobilise the trillions of dollars necessary to build a global zero emissions economy and deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement.

■ Forests: International Cooperation

Virginia Crosbie: [\[10715\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to work with his international counterparts to reduce the impact of global deforestation; and what support the Government has provided to protect rainforests.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Presidency is working with international counterparts and partners to secure global action to protect and restore forests, and shift international agricultural commodity supply chains away from deforestation and transition towards more sustainable practices. We have established the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue to achieve this. The FACT Dialogue is a ground-breaking partnership between governments of producer and consumer countries committed to taking action to transition to more sustainable commodity production and global trade.

■ Recreation Spaces

Darren Henry: [\[900926\]](#)

What steps he is taking to promote investment in green spaces in preparation for COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As part of the UK's commitment to put nature at the heart of climate action, between 2021 and 2026 at least £3bn of UK International Climate Finance will be invested to protect, restore and sustainably manage nature, delivering strong outcomes for biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, and poverty reduction; creating jobs and sustainable economic growth for those communities acutely at risk.

■ Renewable Energy: Wales

Virginia Crosbie: [\[10713\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had with (a) the Welsh Government, (b) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (c) industry bodies to use the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference to promote the renewables industry of (i) Wales and (ii) Ynys Môn.

Alok Sharma:

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

I am working with the Welsh Government, alongside the other devolved administrations, to ensure an inclusive and ambitious COP26 for the whole of the UK.

As part of this, I chair the COP26 Devolved Administrations (DAs) meetings with climate change ministers from the DAs. The COP26 Unit also worked with the Welsh Government and other DAs to encourage proposals from stakeholders, such as the renewables industry, across the UK via the Expression of Interest process for events or showcasing in UK Government managed spaces at COP26.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021

David Mundell:

[\[900929\]](#)

What steps he is taking to consult with (a) civil society and (b) youth groups in preparation for COP26.

Alok Sharma:

I have established a diverse international Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council, the first of its kind at any COP, to work with the UK Presidency to deliver a successful summit. The co-chairs are young climate activists, one from the global north and one from the global south.

I have also committed to and have been meeting civil society and youth groups on my international visits to ensure their voices are heard at COP26.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Third Sector

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[10714\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to work with the Welsh Government to ensure there are opportunities for civil society to engage with COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Civil society, with their links to on-the-ground communities and practitioners, are key partners to achieve the goals we have set for COP26. This is why I have set up an International COP26 Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council so that we can hear and act on the knowledge of civil society groups. My officials run regular, open-invite calls with a large network of civil society organisations to share updates on our planning for COP26, which are regularly attended by Welsh groups.

We are working with the Welsh Government, alongside the other devolved administrations, to ensure an inclusive and ambitious COP26 for the whole of the UK. As part of this, I chair the COP26 Devolved Administrations (DAs) Ministerial meeting with climate change ministers from the DAs. The COP26 Unit also worked with the Welsh Government and other DAs to encourage proposals from stakeholders across the UK via the Expression of Interest process for events or showcasing in UK Government managed spaces at COP26.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Video Conferencing

John Redwood:

[\[8520\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what estimate he has made of the carbon footprint of COP26 with all delegates attending in person.

John Redwood: [\[8521\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether he plans to make virtual participation in COP26 available.

John Redwood: [\[8522\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making COP26 a virtual conference which can recommend reducing air travel through leading by example.

Alok Sharma:

Our intent remains to hold the conference in person, respecting the wishes of all parties, many of whom feel strongly that the COP must be in person. However, we also continue to explore how technology and other innovations can make it more resilient, safe and inclusive.

We are working with our Sustainability Consultant on the principle priority to reduce emissions from the conference within a robust Carbon Management Plan, with any unavoidable carbon emissions from COP26 to be offset. We will encourage all delegates to consider low-carbon travel options and will be offsetting the emissions associated with travel, including those of the COP President and UK officials in the run up to COP26.

As part of our COP26 carbon management planning process, we are currently developing a baseline assessment of the scale of carbon emissions and the priority areas for action. All carbon accounting is being carried out in line with the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and other sources of best practice guidance and will be published once the event has been delivered.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals

Dan Jarvis: [\[10390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications his Department has received for the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme; and how many applicants to that scheme have (a) been excluded from the UK relocation option, (b) been accepted for relocation to the UK under category (i) one (ii) two and (iii) four and (c) not yet been informed of a decision on their application.

James Heappey:

While we are significantly accelerating the pace of relocations, for reasons of operational security, it is currently not appropriate to release details on timeframes or specific figures at this stage.

Dan Jarvis: [\[10391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to offer former locally employed staff, who fall outside the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

scheme as they fled to third countries due to security threats, a route to relocation in the UK.

James Heappey:

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy for locally engaged staff requires applicants to be in Afghanistan where they are likely to face the greatest risk. The Government keeps the Immigration Rules under regular review, and officials from the Ministry of Defence continue to work with the Home Office to consider options to support those under threat. We will always consider exceptionally compelling and compassionate circumstances on a case-by-case basis, as demonstrated by a recent relocation from a third country.

■ **Afghanistan: Interpreters**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[10172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan interpreters have moved to the UK under the intimidation scheme since its inception.

James Heappey:

Prior to the launch of the Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), under the intimidation policy, 21 people were relocated to the UK. This includes the Locally Employed Staff member and their immediate family.

The ARAP scheme came into effect on 1 April 2021 and offers the relocation of current and former local staff in Afghanistan, including interpreters and their immediate families.

This new scheme acknowledges and reflects that the situation in Afghanistan has changed, and with it the potential risk to the local staff who have worked for the UK Government over the past twenty years.

Under the new policy, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served.

■ **Afghanistan: Security Guards**

Jessica Morden:

[\[10254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will extend the support available to UK locally employed staff in Afghanistan to those employed by private firms involved in security operations supporting UK government staff, buildings and agencies in Afghanistan.

James Heappey:

The Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was designed with a recognition that many of those who worked with Her Majesty's Government may not have been directly employed by us. Through the ARAP a significant number of these people will be eligible for relocation to the UK, including contracted Afghan interpreters working for MOD who will be invited to apply.

■ Ajax Vehicles

Stephen Morgan: [\[10608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of his Department's ability to meet the initial operating capability for Ajax's scheduled deployment in summer 2021 as planned.

Jeremy Quin:

The forecast Initial Operating Capability (IOC) was delayed by a year to 30 June 2021, at a 50 per cent confidence with 90 per cent confidence of September 2021.

I refer the hon. Member to the answers I provided to the Urgent Question on Tuesday 8 June (Official Report, column 821). The Department will not be declaring IOC until it is confident there is a pathway to resolution for any noise and vibration issues.

Attachments:

1. Ajax Programme Urgent Question [Urgent Question on Ajax Programme.docx]

■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[10194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason the decision was made to make advanced payments to General Dynamics with regards to the Ajax contract.

Jeremy Quin:

Payments are made quarterly in arrears following the completion of milestones to the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) satisfaction. While the MOD has powers under Cabinet Office guidance to make advanced payments during Covid to support suppliers throughout the pandemic no such advance payments have been made under this contract.

Stephen Morgan: [\[10609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much has his Department spent on the (a) development and (b) procurement of Ajax, by financial year.

Jeremy Quin:

The following payments have been made for the financial years 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2021:

FINANCIAL YEAR	DEMONSTRATION	MANUFACTURE PHASE	TOTAL OF D&M PHASE
	PHASE		
	(£million Payments inc-VAT)	(£million Payments inc-VAT)	(£million Payments inc-VAT)
2010/11	47.57	-	47.57
2011/12	146.49	-	146.49
2012/13	55.76	-	55.76

FINANCIAL YEAR	DEMONSTRATION PHASE	MANUFACTURE PHASE	TOTAL OF D&M PHASE
2013/14	110.40	-	110.40
2014/15	155.37	84.60	239.97
2015/16	28.80	165.87	194.67
2016/17	89.76	213.21	302.98
2017/18	5.23	277.27	282.50
2018/19	20.59	521.16	541.75
2019/20	16.03	564.51	580.55
2020/21	12.65	463.72	476.36
Total to Date:	688.64	2,290.35	2,978.99

In addition, there have been £188 million in in-service payments outside of the Demonstration and Manufacture Phase costs.

■ **Belarus: Overseas Aid**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[10477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) military and (b) policing support his Department provided to Belarus in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

James Heapey:

In 2020, UK Ministry of Defence support to Belarus included Winter Survival Training and English language training (in support of Belarusian Personnel destined for UN Peacekeeping Operations). One Belarusian Officer completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Defence Academy (started in 2019). The UK also provided a small amount of PPE (sourced in Belarus) to the Red Star Military Hospital.

In August 2020 the UK suspended our Defence engagement programme with Belarus and ceased support to the Belarusian armed forces.

The UK Ministry of Defence has only engaged with the Belarusian Ministry of Defence and armed forces, there has been no engagement with any aspect of the Belarusian Police.

■ Boxer Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[10208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide details of the (a) variants and (b) respective numbers of Boxer that have been ordered and financed for the Army.

Jeremy Quin:

Details of the variants of Boxer currently on order by quantity can be found in the table below. The Department is looking to enhance and uplift the size of the total UK Boxer order as we work to implement the Integrated Review. This may include new variants and partnering opportunities with industry and our Allies.

VARIANTS AND ROLES			NUMBERS	
MIV VARIANT	BUILD CONFIGURATIONS (BC)	ROLE	BY ROLE	BY BC
	Infantry Carrying Vehicle (ICV)	ICV	85	85
Armoured Personnel Carriers		Engineer Section Vehicle (ESV)	60	
	Specialist Carrier Vehicle (SCV)	Recce/Fire Support Vehicle (Recce/FSV)	62	200
		Mortar Carrying Variant (MCV)	28	
Equipment Support		ES Repair (Rep)	50	
		Command & Control Vehicle (C2V)	123	
		C2-Utility (C2U) Vehicle		
Command, Control, Communication, Computers & Information (C4I)	Command Post	Observation Post Vehicle (OPV)	19	177
		Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS)	24	
		Electronic Warfare & SIGINT (ESWI)	11	
Ambulance (Amb)	(Amb)	(Amb)	61	61
Totals:			523	523

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[10209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Boxer variant for the infantry ordered to replace Warrior is classified as an (a) Armoured Fighting Vehicle or (b) Armoured Personnel Carrier.

Jeremy Quin:

Boxer is an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC), which is a sub-category of Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs).

AFVs are defined as "Land platforms designed to conduct mounted close combat". These include: Main Battle Tanks (MBTs, such as Challenger 2), Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs, such as Warrior), Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs, such as Boxer) and reconnaissance vehicles that operate in the Forward Edge of the Battle Area (Ajax).

Boxer is not directly replacing the Warrior IFV but will be part of a new networked combat system of systems operating concept.

■ C17 Aircraft**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[10211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to reduce the size of the fleet of RAF C-17 transport planes.

Jeremy Quin:

There are no plans to reduce the C-17 Globemaster fleet from its current size of eight aircraft.

■ Chinook Helicopters: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[10186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1008 on Chinook Helicopters: Procurement, for what reason the UK workshare for every Chinook manufactured varies between three and six per cent.

Jeremy Quin:

The Foreign Military Sale case for the acquisition of 14 Chinook H-47 Extended Range helicopters does not include firm costs for each UK sub-contractor in the wider US supply chain. The UK workshare for every Chinook manufactured is therefore estimated at between 3-6% of unit value. This will depend on the negotiated unit value for each discrete production lot (contract) and the supply chain costs prevalent at that time.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[10187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the social value requirement for his Department's procurement contracts is being fulfilled for the purchase of 14 Extended Range Chinooks.

Jeremy Quin:

The purchase of 14 new Extended-Range Chinook helicopters is being made through a Foreign Military Sales arrangement with the US Government and is exempt from the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR 2015) and Defence and Security Public Contract Regulations (DSPCR 2011).

The Cabinet Office Social Value Model is not applicable to this specific procurement activity. However, in accordance with the wider Defence and Security Industrial Strategy and HM Treasury's Green Book framework, we will continue to seek to drive investment in the UK economy.

The contract for the 14 new Extended Range Chinook helicopters is expected to support jobs in and the wider UK supply chain for both manufacture and long-term support.

Mr Kevan Jones: **[10190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 1009 on Chinook Helicopters: Procurement, for what reason there is a discrepancy in the reported sales cost for Extended Range Chinook Helicopters between (a) £1.4 billion stated in that answer and (b) £2.8 billion stated in the 2018 Defence Security and Cooperation Agency.

Jeremy Quin:

The Approved Budgetary Level for the acquisition of 14 Chinook H-47 Extended Range Helicopters of £1.4 billion is based on the Foreign Military Sale case value received in 2020. The earlier estimate, as published by the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency, was prepared in advance of the final agreed cost and included the potential provision for a further two aircraft if requested.

■ Defence: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: **[10191]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Infrastructure Projects Authority has previously reported on standalone defence programmes.

Jeremy Quin:

Yes. The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) routinely undertake Assurance Reviews of many of our major projects and programmes in accordance with the individual programme's integrated assurance and approvals plan. A report is produced at the end of each review for the Ministry of Defence's Permanent Under Secretary (the Departmental Accounting Officer) and Senior Responsible Owner containing recommendations for consideration and implementation.

In addition, details of the types of review that can be commissioned by the Senior Responsible Owner can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/infrastructure-and-projects-authority-assurance-review-toolkit>

Mr Kevan Jones: **[10193]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when assessing capital adequacy for US-based contracts, whether the decision to advance payment is based upon an examination of the finances of the US-listed company or its UK subsidiary.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) assesses the economic and financial standing of companies bidding for MOD work (including US listed companies and their UK based subsidiaries) to ensure they have sufficient financial stability to deliver any resulting contract and also monitors the financial health of its contractors throughout its contracts. These assessments are independent from, and not linked to, any decision to use any form of interim payment on any particular contract.

■ Navy: Taiwan Strait**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[10212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Minister is responsible for deciding what Royal Navy ships may pass through the Taiwan Strait in 2021.

James Heappey:

As with all operational policy, naval deployments are a Ministry of Defence Departmental responsibility under the Secretary of State for Defence. Where Defence activity has broader policy implications for other Government Departments, it is usual for the Defence Secretary to consult with Cabinet colleagues before issuing his direction.

■ Saudi Arabia: Military Aid**Hywel Williams:**[\[10169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Saudi Air Force pilots (a) are currently training at RAF Valley and (b) have trained at RAF Valley annually in the last three years.

James Heappey:

There are no Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) students currently training at RAF Valley. In the last three years 30* RSAF students have trained at RAF Valley.

We are unable to breakdown the total number of Royal Saudi Air Force students annually as training spans more than one year and individuals may be counted more than once.

*In accordance with the Data Protection Act and our obligations in relation to the protection of confidentiality when handling personal data, the data has been rounded to the nearest 10.

■ Veterans: Identity Cards**Justin Madders:**[\[10460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the online verification tool for the purpose of verifying Veterans ID cards will be live.

Justin Madders: **[10461]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of services and discounts existing Veterans have been unable to access due to delays with phase 2 of the Veterans' recognition scheme.

Stephanie Peacock: **[10558]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to roll out phase 2 of the Veterans' ID card.

Leo Docherty:

A veteran does not require a recognition or ID card to prove their status; there are a number of ways an individual veteran, or service provider, can verify someone's Service and facilitate access to support or discounts such as the Veterans' Railcard which was made available in November 2020. In addition, a wide range of benefits and discounts provided by the commercial sector can be accessed via the Defence Discount Service, which veterans are entitled to join and register for the official Veterans' Discount Card, the Defence Privilege Card.

The Government remains committed to developing an online digital verification tool which will make it as easy as possible for veterans to verify their Service. A delivery date will be confirmed in due course, along with details of the next phase of the Veterans' ID card roll-out. Closer to the launch date, information will be released at the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-veterans-id-cards-rolled-out-to-service-leavers>

If veterans are unclear on what they are entitled to, they can contact the Veterans Welfare Service through the gov.uk website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service>), using the UK freephone number 0808 1914 2 18 (overseas +44 1253 866043) or using veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

■ Viral Diseases: Disease Control**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** **[10210]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what role his Department (a) has or (b) plans to have in (i) monitoring and (ii) identifying international virus outbreaks in the future via an early bio-security warning system.

James Heapey:

The UK Health Security Agency was established in April 2021, with part of its remit to detect and monitor infectious diseases and other hazards to health including through surveillance, analysis, horizon scanning and early warning systems. Defence is working extremely closely with DHSC and partners across Government to establish how we might best support this work.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Choirs: Coronavirus**

Dan Jarvis: [\[10392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to allow amateur choirs to return to indoor rehearsals in groups of more than six.

Dan Jarvis: [\[10393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the data used to inform the policy that amateur choirs cannot rehearse indoors in a group of more than six people.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

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

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

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[10727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will (a) review current covid-19 restrictions on the activities of amateur choirs in respect of (i) necessity and (ii) consistency with those on other groups and (b) issue new guidance accordingly.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

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

■ Football: Females

Dan Jarvis:

[\[10394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support girls and women pursue careers in football.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are absolutely committed to supporting diversity in sport at every opportunity including through employment.

We support the Football Association's work in encouraging more women and girls into football. On 19 October 2020, the Football Association published its new women's and girls' football strategy 'Inspiring Positive Change: FA Women's Football Strategy 2020-24'. The strategy includes a commitment to developing a diverse, well supported and highly skilled workforce including coaches, referees, sports development officers and administrators at every level of the game. An example of how they plan to achieve this by 2024 is by encouraging more coaches in the women and girls' game, with a greater proportion being female and from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

In addition to this, in October 2020 the FA launched their Football Leadership Diversity Code to increase diversity and inclusion across English football. This included the target of 30% of new hires being female in senior leadership and team operation roles.

UK Sport and Sport England's Code for Sports Governance (published in 2016) seeks to improve the diversity of governance structures in sport and applies to any organisation seeking public funding for sport. Latest figures show that women now account for 40% of board members across bodies funded by either Sport England or UK Sport.

■ Honresfield Library

Hilary Benn:

[\[10165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to help ensure that the Honresfield Library remains in the UK.

Caroline Dinéage:

The UK's export-licensing procedures allow us to identify important items of cultural property of national significance which are in danger of being sold abroad and to consider whether an attempt should be made to keep them in the UK, whilst respecting the rights of owners.

An export licence is required for cultural goods manufactured or produced more than 50 years before the date of export and valued above certain thresholds (except in the case of documents and manuscripts where there is no minimum financial value).

If items at risk of export are considered by an expert adviser to be of outstanding importance they are referred to the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art. If the Committee decides that an object meets one or more criteria used to

determine national importance, it may recommend that the Secretary of State defers the granting of an export licence in order to give a UK institution or collector the opportunity to acquire it.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Rosie Duffield: [\[10560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will publish data on the airborne transmission of covid-19 as a result of groups of more than six people singing.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

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

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

■ Tourism: Coronavirus

Anne Marie Morris: [\[10396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions officials in his Department have had with relevant stakeholders on the allocation of additional funding to support the running of tourist information centres following the covid-19 outbreak.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[10397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of adding tourist information centres and points to the list of statutory services provided by local authorities.

Nigel Huddleston:

No specific assessment has been made regarding the potential merits of adding tourist information centres to the list of statutory services provided by Local Authorities.

However, my Department recently commissioned an independent review of Destination Management Organisations led by Nick de Bois which is looking at how best regional and local tourism is structured, funded and supported by the central

Government. As many Destination Management Organisations run their own tourist information centres, or have done so in the past, the review may touch on this issue.

Last year, the Government provided £2.3 million in financial support to England's Destination Management Organisations, so that they could continue carrying out vital business support roles during the pandemic.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[10544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the Government will issue an official apology to people affected by historic forced adoptions.

Vicky Ford:

The government has, on several occasions, expressed its deepest sympathy for those affected by historical forced adoptions, and I completely endorse those sentiments. Practices in the past which led to such outcomes cannot now occur, not least because of the protection of legislation which has been introduced by successive governments and which is given effect by our independent judiciary. Birth parents also have legal representatives who are appointed to support them in court. These representatives ensure that the views of birth parents are heard and that evidence put forward can be challenged.

■ Agriculture: Further Education

Tim Farron: [\[7775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding the Government allocated to agricultural colleges in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Gillian Keegan:

Allocation values are supplied for institutions specified as Agricultural and Horticultural Colleges and includes the institution name and UK Provider Reference Number as the identifier in the accompanying excel document.

Allocations are on an academic year basis (August to July) and therefore span multiple years. We have provided the values from August 2016 to July 2021, where this is not the case it is caveated in the notes.

The data does not contain information relating to:

- Apprenticeships funded through the employer led apprenticeship service where there is no allocation value.
- European social fund, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esf-2014-to-2020-programme-list-of-contracts>.

Each year will have policy changes which are not detailed in the notes.

Attachments:

1. 7775_table [7775_table_funding_for_agricultural_colleges_201617_to_202021.xls]

Tim Farron:**[7776]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the level of funding that will be allocated to agricultural colleges in (a) 2021, (b) 2022, (c) 2023 and (d) 2024.

Gillian Keegan:

In common with all other types of provider, funding allocations to agricultural colleges for the 2021/22 academic year for 16-19 students have yet to be finalised. While we have now issued allocations to individual schools and colleges, we are still considering business cases from providers. Until this process is complete, funding allocations are still subject to change.

Providers in receipt of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Adult Education Budget (AEB), including agricultural colleges, will receive an allocation for the 2021/22 academic funding year which is the same as it was in 2020/21, with any necessary adjustments for the impact of devolution and to remove allocations that were for one year only. In areas where the AEB has been devolved, Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority are responsible for making provider allocations.

Allocations beyond the 2021/22 academic year for both 16-19 funding and the AEB are subject to the outcome of the Spending Review.

■ Children: Disability**Dame Diana Johnson:****[10229]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating funding to the provision of additional therapies for disabled children.

Helen Hayes:**[10531]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the benefits of funding additional therapies for disabled children.

Vicky Ford:

We know how important access to therapy services are for pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which is why we are clear in our guidance that specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff should provide interventions as usual. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

Additionally, in the Chief Nurse's letter of 7 October 2020 to Directors of Nursing, she made it clear that maintaining support for families is a priority and that professionals supporting children and families should not be redeployed to other services.

We are committed to helping all children and young people with SEND and have prioritised those who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts both in the 2020 Catch-up Premium and in the 2021 Recovery Premium. They, along with the pupil premium funding, can be used to support disadvantaged children and young people's wider needs if required, including the provision of therapies. Additionally, specialist settings will also receive an uplift to deliver summer schools and will have the flexibility to plan provision based on pupils need.

We continue to encourage schools and colleges to work collaboratively with their local authority, clinical commissioning group and health providers to ensure that children and young people with SEND have access to appropriate therapies and support.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[10230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is he taking to help disabled children recover lost progress in managing their conditions as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

We recognise that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning, health and wellbeing, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We are committed to supporting them and their families.

On 2 June 2021 we announced £1.4 billion new funding in addition to the £1.7 billion already committed, bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3 billion.

We have consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts to these settings, both in the 2020 Catch-up Premium and in the 2021 Recovery Premium, where specialist settings will also receive an uplift to deliver summer schools, at 3 times the normal rate. In mainstream settings, school leaders are able to target these initiatives to vulnerable children and are able to use the recovery premium to meet wider non-academic needs.

New funding for school-led tutoring will provide greater flexibility to schools to take on local tutors or use existing staff to supplement those employed through the existing National Tutoring Programme. We anticipate that this will especially benefit children and young people with SEND in all settings, where tutors familiar to these children can support them to realise the benefits of tuition.

Additional funding for training will ensure that teachers in schools and early years settings are able to access high quality training and professional development, designed around how to support all pupils to succeed. This includes children and young people with SEND in all settings. We know that high quality teaching is the best way to support all students, including those with SEND.

The 16-19 Tuition Fund will continue to support students with SEND as at present through small group tuition. Pupils with SEND in year 13 with an education, health

and care plan will also be eligible to repeat up to a year where they have missed out due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Given the importance of therapists (such as speech and language or occupational therapy) and other health professionals in supporting children and young people with SEND, we are reminding settings that specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils and students with SEND should provide interventions as usual.

■ **Communication Skills: Curriculum**

Emma Hardy:

[7928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that all schools are meeting their statutory requirements as part of the spoken language programme of study within the Primary and Secondary National Curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

Standard English is taught in schools from Year 1 and the aim is that every young person should be able to use Standard English irrespective of accent or dialect, where appropriate, in writing and relatively formal speaking.

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing.

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 should be taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers;
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge;
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary;
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions;
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings;
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments;
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas;
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English;
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates;
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s);
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others;

- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.

Spoken language continues to underpin the development of pupils' reading and writing during Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The National Curriculum programmes of study for these key stages state that teachers should ensure pupils' confidence and competence in this area continue to develop. Pupils should be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate, as well as continuing to develop their skills in working collaboratively with their peers to discuss reading, writing and speech across the curriculum.

The Department's poetry competition, delivered by Poetry by Heart, supports this initiative and helps to develop and support inspiring poetry teaching in schools, and to motivate pupils and teachers to explore our rich literary heritage. Pupils choose poems from the online anthology covering 1,000 years of poetry and recite these in school-based competitions. A national final will be held in July 2021 and is open to pupils in Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5.

In 2018, the Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs Programme dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, with a focus on supporting children making the slowest progress in reading, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The 34 English Hubs in the programme are primary schools which are outstanding at teaching early reading. We have since invested a further £17 million in this school-to-school improvement programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. Since its launch, the English Hubs Programme has provided appropriate and targeted support to several thousands of schools across England. In the 2020/21 academic year, the programme is providing intensive support to over 875 partner schools.

■ Primary Education: Assessments

Caroline Lucas:

[\[8570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Information Commissioner's Office has approved the Government's proposals for the collection and management of pupil data gathered through the Reception Baseline Assessment; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has regularly consulted with the Information Commissioner's Office when developing the data processing aspects of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). We are confident that we are taking the right approach with the RBA data.

■ Primary Education: Sports

Mr William Wragg:

[\[10463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish details of the PE and Sport Premium for the 2021-22 academic year.

Ian Byrne:

[\[10698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his timetable is for announcing arrangements for the primary PE and sport premium funding for the 2021-22 academic year; and how he plans to calculate that funding.

James Daly:

[\[10707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the PE and Sport Premium for the 2021-22 academic year will be announced.

Nick Gibb:

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

■ Pupils: English Language

Emma Hardy:

[\[7926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 school closures on the spoken language (a) development and (b) ability of schoolchildren across all ages.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education and we are working with schools and colleges to develop a long term plan to support pupils make up for education lost over the course of this Parliament.

In June 2021, the Department announced £1.4 billion of additional funding for education recovery. This is in addition to the £1.7 billion already committed, bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3 billion. The additional funding package provides support for children aged 2 to 19 in schools, colleges and early years settings, and will increase reforms in two areas where the evidence is clear our investment will have a significant impact: high quality tutoring and teaching. This will provide an additional £1 billion for tutoring, which will allow us to provide up to 100 million hours of tuition for 5-19 year olds by 2024, targeting disadvantaged children and key subjects such as maths and English. We are also making available an extra £400 million to help to provide 500,000 teacher training opportunities across the country, alongside professional development for early years practitioners.

The Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs programme in 2018, dedicated to improving the teaching of reading. The 34 English Hubs in the programme are primary schools which are outstanding at teaching early reading. We have since provided a further £17 million for this school to school improvement programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. Since its launch, the English Hubs programme has provided appropriate and targeted support to several thousands of schools across England. In

the 2020/21 academic year the programme is providing intensive support to over 875 partner schools.

Emma Hardy:

[7927]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking tackle the language gap between the most and least advantaged pupils.

Nick Gibb:

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

There is sound evidence that systematic phonics is a highly effective method for teaching early reading. The evidence indicates that the teaching of phonics is most effective when combined with a language-rich curriculum. Evidence has also shown that phonics is an important component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our phonics performance has improved since the tests were introduced. In 2019, 82% of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the phonics screening check, compared to just 58% when the check was introduced in 2012. For disadvantaged pupils, this has gone from 45% in 2012 to 71% in 2019. 2019 results showed that by the end of Year 2, 91% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check.

In June 2021, the Department announced £1.4 billion of additional funding for education recovery. This is in addition to the £1.7 billion already committed, bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3 billion. The additional funding package provides support for children aged 2 to 19 in schools, colleges and early years settings, and will increase reforms in two areas where the evidence is clear our investment will have a significant impact: high quality tutoring and teaching. This will provide an additional £1 billion for tutoring, which will allow us to provide up to 100 million hours of tuition for 5-19 year olds by 2024, targeting disadvantaged children and key subjects such as maths and English.

The National Curriculum has been designed to make sure that all children leave primary school fully literate and ready to progress at secondary school. One of the overarching aims of the National Curriculum is to ensure that all pupils acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language. The curriculum for English increases the level of demand from an early age with greater emphasis on grammar and vocabulary development.

The Department also launched a £26.3 million English Hubs Programme in 2018, dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, with a focus on supporting children making the slowest progress in reading, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

■ Pupils: Mental Health

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[10232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to invest in improving the (a) emotional well-being and (b) mental health of school children as part of the schools recovery plan.

Vicky Ford:

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

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

On 10 May 2021 we confirmed that up to 7,800 schools and colleges in England will be offered funding worth £9.5 million to train a senior mental health lead from their staff in the next academic year, which is part of the government's commitment to offering this training to all state schools and colleges by 2025. Training will provide senior leads with the knowledge and skills to develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting, which encourages staff to develop their own understanding of issues affecting their pupils, giving young people a voice in how their school or college addresses wellbeing and working with parents and monitoring pupils where appropriate. We will also fund an adapted 'Link' programme which is designed to improve partnerships between health and education

leaders in local areas, raise awareness of mental health concerns and improve referrals to specialist help when needed.

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

■ Remote Education: Computers

Chi Onwurah: [\[10378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the provision of digital devices by schools to students, whether those devices are to be returned to the school in the summer term 2021; and what steps he is taking to help ensure that students are able to maintain their (a) learning and (b) digital skills once those devices are returned.

Nick Gibb:

Laptops and tablets provided to schools and colleges through the Get Help with Technology programme are the property of the institution that received them. These laptops and tablets are additional support on top of an estimated 2.9 million already owned by schools before the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is for individual schools or colleges to make decisions on the management and distribution of devices they have received. The Department has not stipulated to any school or college that they must request the return of devices from students.

We recognise that technology in education has been essential for continuing to teach remotely during the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent school and college closures. The Department has provided significant investment in devices, platforms, training and digital services to develop a sustainable strategy for digital technology in education.

■ Respite Care: Finance

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[10228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of funding additional respite care for the families of disabled children to help alleviate exhaustion and social isolation.

Vicky Ford:

I refer the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North to the answer I gave on 2 June 2021 to Question [7328](#).

■ Schools: Asbestos

Jon Trickett: [\[8541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to remove asbestos from schools.

Jon Trickett: [\[8542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of schools in England containing asbestos.

Nick Gibb:

The Department follows expert advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which states that as long as asbestos-containing materials are in good condition, well protected either by their position or physical protection, and are unlikely to be worked on, it is usually safer to manage them in place. Where that is not the case, the duty holder should have it removed, and the Department provides significant condition funding which can be used for this purpose.

Since 2015, the Department has allocated £11.3 billion to those responsible for school buildings for essential maintenance and improvements, including removal or encapsulation of asbestos when such is the safest course of action. This includes £1.8 billion committed for financial year 2021-22.

Through the Priority School Building Programme, the Department has been rebuilding or refurbishing buildings in the worst condition at over 500 schools across the country. My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced a new 10-year rebuilding programme for schools, which will replace poor condition buildings with modern, energy efficient designs. The Department has announced the first 50 schools to benefit from the programme, as part of a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade.

In July 2019, the Department published information from the Asbestos Management Assurance Process (AMAP) designed to understand the prevalence of asbestos in schools and how well it is managed. Of the 19,522 (88.4%) state-funded schools in England which participated, a total of 15,796 (80.9%) of participating schools stated some asbestos was present on their estate. The responses also suggested that there were no systemic failures in the management of asbestos in schools.

The Department takes the issue of asbestos in schools seriously, and is committed to supporting schools, local authorities and academy trusts to fulfil their duty to manage asbestos safely. We have taken significant steps in recent years to strengthen schools' approach to managing asbestos. In addition to conducting the AMAP, the Department published updated guidance on effectively managing asbestos in schools in October 2020, working closely with HSE experts, union representatives and other sector representatives to do so.

■ Students: Finance**Barbara Keeley:** **[10312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made towards establishing a Takaful-based funding structure for financial support for students in higher and further education.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is considering the Alternative Student Finance (ASF) product carefully and will provide a further update with the full and final conclusion of the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding. The interim report of the review was published on 21 January 2021, and the review is scheduled to conclude alongside the next multi-year Spending Review. An update on the ASF product will be provided at that time.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover**Julie Elliott:** **[10383]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) workload of teachers, (b) retention rate of teachers in that profession and (c) reasons for which teachers leave that profession.

Nick Gibb:

Teacher retention and workload are key priorities for the Department. The latest teacher workload survey, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2019>, showed that the average total self-reported working hours in a given week for classroom teachers and middle leaders in primary and secondary schools in England was 49.5 hours, down by 4.9 hours compared to the 54.4 hours reported in 2016.

The most recent annual school workforce census, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2019>, showed that of the teachers who qualified in 2018, 85.4% were still in service one year after qualification. This retention rate was slightly higher than the previous year when the one year retention rate was 85.1%. The November 2020 school workforce census will be published on 17 June 2021.

Whilst workload has been consistently cited as one of the main reasons given by teachers for leaving the profession, recent evidence suggests that it is the relationship between workload, job satisfaction and teacher autonomy that influences teacher retention.

The Department is therefore taking action to make sure that teachers are supported to stay in the profession. In May 2021 we published the education staff wellbeing charter. Developed in partnership with the sector, this sets out a range of commitments on the Government and employers in schools and colleges on wellbeing. The Charter is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>.

The Department's school workload reduction toolkit, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit>, developed alongside school leaders, is a helpful resource that is being used by schools to review and reduce workload in their unique context.

We are ensuring teachers have access to high quality training and development, from initial teacher training (ITT) through to school leadership, by creating an entitlement to at least three years of structured support and professional development for teachers at the start of their careers. Underpinning this is the new ITT Core Content Framework and the Early Career Framework. The Department is also launching new National Professional Qualifications for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high quality teaching practice to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animal Products: Imports**

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[10709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ban the imports of trophy hunting memorabilia; and what his planned timescale is for such a ban.

Victoria Prentis:

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

■ **Artificial Lawns: Biodiversity**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[10218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has carried out an assessment of the effect of artificial lawns on species loss and biodiversity.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[10219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Natural England on the effect of artificial lawns on species loss and biodiversity.

Rebecca Pow:

Surfaces such as artificial grass are, on their own, of no value for biodiversity.

We currently have no plans to ban or restrict the use of artificial grass. We prefer to help people and organisations make the right choice rather than legislating on this

matter. As with all single-use plastic products, we will continue to review the latest evidence on impacts and take a systematic approach to reducing unnecessary use.

Research has shown that gardens and public spaces can be very important habitats, for example for pollinating insects. Working with a range of partners, Defra has established a 'Bees' Needs' campaign including advice on providing habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, including in gardens.

Local authorities should comply with the legal and policy safeguards in place to protect biodiversity and ensure sustainable drainage. The strengthened biodiversity duty being introduced through the Environment Bill should also serve to encourage public authorities to consider more sustainable alternatives.

■ **Countryside: Access**

Barbara Keeley: [\[10309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his comments at the Wild Live event on 18 May 2021, how much funding previously allocated to the Basic Payment Scheme has been allocated to projects to improve public access to the countryside; and if he will publish the names of those projects.

Victoria Prentis:

The Agricultural Transition Plan outlined the Government's plans for farming for the length of this parliament. We have a manifesto commitment to maintain the farming budget for the duration of this parliament. Over this period, as we phase out Direct Payments, we will redirect this money into our new environmental land management schemes. Public access is one of the public goods for which Ministers will be able to provide financial assistance through our new schemes, using powers in the Agriculture Act 2020.

■ **Farms: Finance**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[10213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 634 on farms: local government finance, if he will publish the membership of the co-design steering group.

Victoria Prentis:

The membership of the co-design steering group will be published. The co-design steering group consists of representatives of local authorities with council farm estates, new entrant farmers, providers of business support for new farmers, cooperative and community land organisations, and private landowners.

■ **Financial Services and Food Supply: Carbon Emissions**

Virginia Crosbie: [\[10716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a statutory deforestation target for UK

supply food and commodity supply chains; and what steps he is taking to bind the finance industry into net-zero and Paris Agreement targets.

Rebecca Pow:

There is no requirement in the Environment Bill for a deforestation target. This does not preclude the Government from setting one if it is judged to be the best way to deliver long-term environmental outcomes. The Bill framework allows for long-term targets to be set on any aspect of the natural environment, or people's enjoyment of it. The Government is committed to setting targets through a robust, evidence-led process that seeks independent expert advice, provides a role for stakeholders and the public, as well as scrutiny from Parliament.

We have commissioned the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to develop a global environmental footprint indicator to help us understand the UK's global footprint. The first phase of this work was published in May 2021, with further development following in the summer. The outcomes of this work will help inform our future thinking on the most appropriate approach to drive change in this area.

On finance, delivering our net zero objective will require deep decarbonisation of all sectors. We know that financial services will be a critical enabler in mobilizing green investment at the pace and scale required – and that is why green finance is a key priority for this Government.

Furthermore, the UK will become the first G20 country to make Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures-aligned disclosures fully mandatory across the economy, with most requirements introduced in the next three years. The Government is also actively supporting the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures.

Finally, the UK will implement a green taxonomy, a common framework for determining which activities can be defined as environmentally sustainable, which will improve understanding of the environmental impact of firms' activities and investments.

■ **Hare Coursing**

Hilary Benn:

[\[10164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to strengthen the law against hare coursing.

Rebecca Pow:

We made it clear in our Action Plan on Animal Welfare that we are determined to do more to crack down on the illegal practice of hare coursing and we have committed to introducing legislation. On 17 June I will be chairing a round table with the police and stakeholders to share our outline proposals and initiate detailed consultations with officials.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals****Jessica Morden:****[10253]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support is available to privately-contracted (non-LES) security workers in Afghanistan who face intimidation as a result of their employment supporting UK Government agencies.

Nigel Adams:

It is for individual private security companies to fulfil fully their duty of care to those they employ. The UK Government requires private security contractors which work for us to ensure they have robust procedures to ensure the safety of all their staff.

■ Armenia: Prisoners of War**Dr Rupa Huq:****[10543]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Azeri counterpart on the safe and immediate return of all Armenian prisoners of war.

Wendy Morton:

During my visit to Armenia and Azerbaijan in February I urged both parties to work with the ICRC to expedite the return of all prisoners of war. Through the OSCE and bilateral engagement in Baku and Yerevan, UK officials continue to urge the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities to prioritise this issue, alongside other unresolved issues following hostilities last year.

■ Arms Trade: Israel**Layla Moran:****[7933]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 4015, what assessment he has made of whether any of those exported land rover vehicles were used by Israeli (a) military or (b) police forces in response to protests in Ramallah on Tuesday 18 May 2021.

James Cleverly:

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

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Martyn Day: [\[10515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2021 to Question 185465 on Bahrain: Political Prisoners, whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what representations he will make to his Bahraini counterpart on (a) inviting the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit and (b) allowing (i) Human Rights Watch, (ii) Amnesty International and (iii) other human rights organisations and monitoring bodies to enter Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

We regularly raise human rights matters with the Government of Bahrain and continue to encourage both the Government of Bahrain and the UN to engage with each other on human rights issues. We understand that the Government of Bahrain has taken steps to engage with the United Nations, and that the Ombudsman has reached out to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, noting that they are keen to work cooperatively on concerns raised. We support and encourage all such engagement.

■ Bahrain: Prisons

Martyn Day: [\[10516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the opinions of the 90th session of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on inmates of Jau Prison in Bahrain, what assessment he has made of the UK Ambassador to Bahrain's comment that Jau Prison is a well-run facility, with good medical provision on 6 May 2021.

James Cleverly:

The Ambassador and other international representatives visited Jau prison on 3 May. That visit enabled our Ambassador to raise human rights matters, to see and assess the facilities and current conditions at Jau prison first hand and to understand the measures implemented to counter Covid-19.

■ Belarus: Freezing of Assets

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[10479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many financial investigations on Belarussian assets in the UK (a) the Government has undertaken and (b) have led to asset freezes or other repercussions.

Wendy Morton:

We are considering all appropriate and effective means of constraining the finances of the Lukashenko regime. We have already imposed over 90 designations in response to the fraudulent elections and subsequent human rights violations in Belarus and are currently examining the evidence for further designation. We have taken decisive action to tackle economic crime - introducing a range of powers in

recent years including account freezing orders and unexplained wealth orders, establishing a new global anti-corruption sanctions regime, and strengthening anti-money laundering requirements on relevant businesses. We will consider all further appropriate and effective measures to prevent the Belarusian regime from making money in the UK.

■ **Belarus: Overseas Aid**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[10478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has planned any ODA spending in Belarus in 2021-22.

Wendy Morton:

For FY2021 - 22, final funding amounts are still to be confirmed for programme spends but we have allocated £1.8 million for the support non-state and other non-government actors, who are working on behalf of the people of Belarus and we are actively looking at ways to increase this.

■ **Belarus: Sanctions**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[10545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has to impose additional sanctions on the government of Belarus.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary stated on 24 May that the Government would coordinate with our international partners on additional measures, including further sanctions. We are doing just that. We have already imposed over 90 designations in response to the fraudulent elections and subsequent human rights violations in Belarus. Government officials are currently examining the evidence for further designations. Furthermore, we are in contact with allies to strengthen an effective and unified stance against the Lukashenko regime.

■ **Belarus: Trade Promotion**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[10476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to run subsequent Belarus-UK seasons following the 2020 event in Minsk.

Wendy Morton:

Prior to the crackdown on human rights in Belarus following last year's fraudulent Presidential elections, our Embassy in Minsk helped to facilitate a UK-Belarus season in conjunction with the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce in order to promote the UK's trade and investment interests. There are no current plans to run a subsequent event.

■ **British Nationals Abroad: EU Countries**

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[10243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties on (a) the rights of British nationals resident in France and (b) residency rights of British nationals living in the EU following the UK's departure from the EU.

Wendy Morton:

The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties was concluded at Vienna on 23 May 1969. The UK ratified the Convention on 25 June 1971 and remains a Party to the Convention today. The Convention is broad in scope and codifies the rules relating to international laws on treaties between states. The Convention does not provide for the rights, related to residence or otherwise, of British nationals living in the EU.

The Withdrawal Agreement established the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, in accordance with Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. The Withdrawal Agreement entered into force on 31 January 2020 and protects citizens' rights. It means over five million EU citizens in the UK and over one million UK nationals in the EU can continue to live, work, study and access benefits and services, such as healthcare, broadly as they did before the UK left the EU.

■ **Commonwealth: Coronavirus**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[8591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support Commonwealth countries with their covid-19 vaccine rollout.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, treatments, and tests globally. The UK has committed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) to support access to COVID-19 vaccines for up to 92 developing countries, approximately one third of which are in the Commonwealth. I am pleased to note that 31 Commonwealth countries across four regions will be receiving COVID-19 vaccines as part of the first set of COVAX AMC deliveries, of which 29 have already received their first batches. The UK is encouraging all countries to continue working with COVAX and partners to roll out vaccines, and prepare for future deliveries, which have reached over 127 countries overall so far.

On 2 June, the UK Government launched the G7 Global Vaccine Confidence Campaign, which aims to share best practice, establish partnerships, and build a platform for increasing vaccine confidence internationally. Any Commonwealth country will be able to access the best practice material shared on this platform to increase vaccine confidence.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[10132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to donate surplus covid-19 vaccines originally ordered for use in the UK to countries in need overseas; what estimate he has made of (a) the quantity of surplus doses which will become available and (b) the timeframe for when they will be available; what estimate he has made of the total monetary value of those surplus doses; and whether that monetary value will be included in calculations of the total of overseas aid given by the UK to poorer countries.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to equitable access to safe and effective vaccines and the Prime Minister has called on G7 leaders to vaccinate the world by the end of next year. As the multilateral mechanism set up to support international co-operation on vaccines, COVAX remains best-placed to allocate vaccines fairly and to where they will be most effective. We will continue to discuss this issue with our G7 partners and will issue details of the quantities and timeframe for UK sharing of vaccine doses soon.

■ **Ethiopia: Telecommunications**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[8615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much CDC has invested in the acquisition of the Ethiopia telecoms license with Vodafone and other consortium members; whether Ministerial approval was sought on that acquisition; and on what date such approval was sought.

James Duddridge:

The Global Partnership for Ethiopia was created specifically to bring about transformational economic and social impact through the provision of affordable mobile and internet services in Ethiopia.

The investment is expected to:

- Open access for the first time for c.24 million Ethiopians to digital health, agriculture, education and skills services by 2032.
- Cut prices by up to 75% for mobile internet services by 2032.
- Significantly boost the economy of Ethiopia, including by enabling productivity improvements for over one million small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro-entrepreneurs.

CDC expects to make a total investment commitment of circa \$200 million as part of the Global Partnership for Ethiopia consortium.

■ Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Dan Carden:

[\[10604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the unimpeded delivery of fuel and emergency humanitarian relief to Gaza.

James Cleverly:

Access for humanitarian purposes into and out of Gaza remains critical. We are urging the Government of Israel to ensure access is maintained to ensure delivery of humanitarian supplies, including fuel. I announced on 20 May that the UK is providing £3.2 million to the UN Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) emergency flash appeal, which launched on 19 May. The emergency appeal by UNRWA focuses on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of vulnerable Palestinians living in Gaza.

■ Genocide

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[10398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress has been made towards the establishment of a parliamentary committee to examine allegations of genocide.

Nigel Adams:

Charging a Committee with the functions set out in section 3 of the Trade Act is a matter for Parliament. During the passage of the Bill, it was not possible to secure agreement on which committees would be responsible for this process. However, I can now confirm that the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (FAC) has agreed to be charged with the role in the Commons, subject to agreement by the House. This proposal was agreed through usual channel discussions with the Chair of the FAC and other parties. Discussions are still ongoing in the House of Commons, and are due to begin shortly in the House of Lords.

As previously agreed, the Government will also support the responsible Committees in both Houses being able to refer reports of genocide, in the territory of a prospective Free Trade Agreement counter-party, to a joint committee. Again, once charged, this will be a matter for each House and the responsible Committees to determine, and the Government has committed to bring forward motions if necessary.

■ Global Partnership for Education

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[10216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK will continue to be the largest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education of the G7 countries.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister and President Kenyatta of Kenya will co-host the Global Education Summit: Financing the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in London

in July 2021. As co-hosts, it is our policy to use all the means at our disposal to host a successful Summit. A well-funded GPE will be central to delivering the two ambitious global objectives endorsed by G7 Foreign and Development Ministers in London on 5 May of getting 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 in the next 5 years.

As the Foreign Secretary has previously confirmed, we plan to increase our next contribution to GPE, details of which will be announced in due course. The majority of donor pledges will be known immediately after the Summit in July, with others coming in during the replenishment period.

Harriett Baldwin:

[8594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking ahead of the G7 to help ensure other key donors increase their contributions to the Global Partnership for Education.

Wendy Morton:

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

Lobbying is underway with G7 partners, and guest countries in the run-up to the G7 to set the GPE on course to secure its financing target of \$5 billion over the next five years. At the G7 Summit, the Prime Minister will call on leaders to make ambitious pledges to GPE in support of the G7-endorsed global objectives.

■ Gulf Strategy Fund

Brendan O'Hara:

[10404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question HL15129, if he will provide the allocated budget for the Gulf Strategy Fund, broken down by each financial year that that fund will operate.

James Cleverly:

The Gulf Strategy Fund has been allocated £10m for the 2021/22 Financial Year. Future allocations are dependent on the outcome of the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Hamas**John Howell:****[R] [10313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the role of the political leadership of Hamas in its military activities.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomed 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. The UK unequivocally condemns the firing of rockets at Jerusalem and locations within Israel. We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism from Hamas and other terrorist groups. The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas in its entirety.

■ Hassan Mushaima**Brendan O'Hara:****[10405]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports that imprisoned Bahraini opposition leader, Hasan Mushaima, has developed serious symptoms due to diabetes, what urgent representations the Government plans to make to its Bahraini counterparts on ensuring the immediate provision of adequate medical care to Hasan Mushaima.

James Cleverly:

We continue to monitor and raise the case of Hassan Mushaima and others, as necessary, with the Bahraini Government. The Government of Bahrain has been clear that access to medical care for those in detention is provided in line with the Constitution of Bahrain. We welcome those assurances. We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to raise the matter with the Bahraini human rights oversight bodies.

■ Iran: Israel**Scott Benton:****[8750]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of reports of Iran-linked attacks against Israeli-owned naval vessels.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to ensuring the safety of shipping and to maintaining the principle of freedom of navigation. Growing tensions around strategic maritime choke points threatens the ability of trade to safely pass through international waters. The UK continues to underline the need for a reduction in tensions on all sides.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power**Scott Benton:**[\[8749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his E3 counterparts on the triggering of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism in January 2020 in response to Iran's nuclear activities.

James Cleverly:

The UK, with France and Germany, triggered the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA's) Dispute Resolution Mechanism on 14 January 2020 in response to Iran's systematic non-compliance with the deal. Our priority continues to be to bring Iran back into compliance with its commitments and to return the US to the deal. Negotiations on a return to the JCPOA are currently ongoing in Vienna.

■ Israel: Coronavirus**Julie Elliott:**[\[10382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Israeli government on covid19 vaccinations in that region.

James Cleverly:

The British Embassy Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General Jerusalem are in regular contact with the relevant parties and continue to raise the issue of timely access to vaccines. The Foreign Secretary most recently raised this during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 26 May. The UK is committed to global equitable access to effective vaccines as demonstrated by our £548 million contribution to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) - the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines. We are pleased that the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) were among the first to benefit from the COVAX scheme with delivery of over 61,000 doses that arrived on 17 March 2021. Since that initial shipment, we are pleased that several further deliveries have arrived in the OPTs, including most recently on 1 June 2021.

■ Jonathan Taylor**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[10510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Croatian justice minister, Ivan Malenica, on halting the extradition of the UK whistleblower, Jonathan Taylor to Monaco.

Wendy Morton:

It is for Croatia to determine whether Mr Taylor should be extradited to Monaco, and for Monaco to investigate allegations of attempted extortion. In accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, we are compelled both to exercise our consular functions in foreign States in accordance with local laws and regulations and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of foreign States.

On 12 and 13 April, our Ambassador in Croatia spoke to the Croatian authorities to understand the latest timelines for court action and to reiterate the importance of fair treatment.

I have raised Mr Taylor's case with the Croatian Secretary of State for European Affairs, multiple times, most recently during my visit to Zagreb on 8 June.

Consular officials are in regular contact with the Croatian courts to ensure that we understand the process being followed.

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[10511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Croatia on halting the extradition to Monaco of UK whistleblower, Jonathan Taylor, in the context of concerns expressed by international human rights and whistleblowing experts that that extradition is an abuse of process and in breach of Mr Taylor's human rights.

Wendy Morton:

I spoke to the Monegasque Foreign Minister and the Croatian Secretary of State for European Affairs on 13 November 2020 and sought assurances that both authorities would treat Mr Taylor fairly and give full consideration to the whistle-blowing activities Mr Taylor has reported. Both Croatia and Monaco have provided those assurances. On 12 and 13 April, our Ambassador in Croatia spoke to the Croatian authorities to reiterate the importance of fair treatment. I have continued to raise Mr Taylor's case with the Croatian Secretary of State for European Affairs, so that they are aware of our concerns, most recently during my visit to Zagreb on 8 June. Consular officials in Croatia are in regular contact with Mr Taylor. Mr Taylor's welfare and fair treatment is our priority.

■ **Occupied Territories: Violence**

Dan Carden:

[\[10603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to UN Security Council Resolution 2286 (2016), what steps his Department is taking to pursue accountability for attacks on health workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

James Cleverly:

We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice.

■ Taiwan: Coronavirus**Stephen Kinnock:****[10399]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that Taiwan can viably access an alternative source of covid-19 vaccine supply to that being offered by the Chinese Government.

Nigel Adams:

The UK remains committed to equitable access to safe and effective vaccines and the Prime Minister has stated that we will share vaccines with COVAX and has called on G7 leaders to vaccinate the world by end of next year. We will continue to discuss this issue with our G7 partners and will issue details of the quantities and timeframe for sharing vaccine doses soon.

Taiwan has had one of the lowest incidences of Covid-19 in the world since the outbreak of the pandemic. We are continuing to engage with the relevant authorities locally through the British Office in Taipei as it faces its first significant occurrence of community transmission of the virus. Taiwan has so far received 609,600 doses through the COVAX platform. We will continue to work with all of our international partners to deliver a strong global response to the pandemic.

■ Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps: Sanctions**Ms Nusrat Ghani:****[10475]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his sanctioning of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps XPCC, what penalties apply to UK-based companies that continue to contract with the XPCC.

Nigel Adams:

On 22 March, we imposed sanctions under the Global Human Rights sanctions regime against the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, along with four senior Chinese officials responsible for the serious human rights violations that take place in Xinjiang.

Full details of the prohibitions put in place by financial sanctions can be found in the General Guidance for Financial Sanctions published by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961516/General_Guidance_-_UK_Financial_Sanctions.pdf. Breaching financial sanctions is a criminal offence and may result in a prosecution or a monetary penalty. The maximum value of a monetary penalty ranges from 50% of the value of total breach, or £1 million - whichever is the greater value.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments

Justin Madders: [\[10445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the 12-hour data from time of arrival for all accident and emergency departments.

Edward Argar:

Data on 12 hour waiting times in accident and emergency departments for 2019-20, the latest available data is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/hospital-accident--emergency-activity/2019-20>

■ Antibiotics: Side Effects

Mrs Pauline Latham: [\[7154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of patients who are prescribed fluoroquinolone antibiotics suffer adverse reactions in the form of (a) tendon injury, (b) mitochondrial dysfunction and (c) oxidative stress.

Mrs Pauline Latham: [\[7155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing fluoroquinolone toxicity as a diagnosis in response to (a) tendon injury, (b) mitochondrial dysfunction and (c) oxidative stress attributed by some patients to the use of that drug.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The Yellow Card Scheme is the system used in the United Kingdom for reporting adverse drug reactions (ADRs). This acts as an early warning system for the identification of previously unrecognised adverse reactions and also provides valuable information on recognised ADRs, allowing the Commission on Human Medicines and Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to identify and refine the understanding of risk factors that may affect the clinical management of patients.

The following table shows spontaneous suspected ADR reports for fluoroquinolones in association with tendon injury, mitochondrial dysfunction and oxidative stress to 25 May 2021 in the UK.

REACTION	NUMBER OF REPORTS
Tendon disorders*	1,381
mitochondrial cytopathy, mitochondrial toxicity, 1 mitochondrial myopathy acquired	
Oxidative stress	2**

Source: MHRA Sentinel database for Adverse Drug Reactions.

Notes:

*Tendon disorders includes 21 different relevant reaction terms.

**These reports are duplicates and have been subsequently merged on the database.

The frequency of tendonitis range from 1 in 100 to less than 1 in 10,000, depending on the specific fluoroquinolone medicine. For the products that provide an estimate of the frequency of tendon rupture, this is listed as less than 1 in 10,000. Mitochondrial dysfunction and oxidative stress are among the possible mechanisms that might lead to tendon injury or other ADRs caused by fluoroquinolones, but this association is not fully understood and mitochondrial dysfunction and oxidative stress are not listed as ADRs in the product information for fluoroquinolones.

The MHRA continues to review information about the safety of all medicines, including fluoroquinolones, and will take appropriate regulatory action as appropriate on the basis of new safety information. Serious side effects of fluoroquinolone antibiotics can be varied, potentially affecting several different parts of the body. An assessment of the potential merits of fluoroquinolone toxicity as a clinical diagnosis in response to tendon injury, mitochondrial dysfunction or oxidative stress has not been made.

■ Baby Care Units

Vicky Foxcroft:

[7881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by the charity Bliss, entitled Locked Out: the impact of COVID-19 on neonatal care, if he will publish a National Neonatal Roadmap to help neonatal units to return to full parent access.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Updated guidance published on 15 April 2021 is clear that parents of babies in neonatal critical care need to be involved in their baby's care as much as possible and should not be considered as visitors, and is available at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C1243_Supporting-pregnant-women-using-maternity-services-actions-for-providers_150421.pdf

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

To facilitate full parent access in all neonatal units in England, NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked closely with trusts to adopt the actions set out in the

updated guidance and to remove barriers which prevent trusts being able to facilitate parental presence in neonatal units.

■ Cereals

Alex Norris:

[8724]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to introduce a quantitative recommendation for the daily intake of whole grains.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has no plans to recommend government introduces a quantitative recommendation for the daily intake of wholegrains.

This is because there is no agreed definition for the term 'wholegrain'. Therefore, government dietary guidelines do not give specific quantitative advice for wholegrain intake.

There are however specific government recommendations for dietary fibre based on recommendations from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, as set out in its Carbohydrates and Health report, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report>.

Fibre is found in a range of foods and is not exclusive to wholegrain foods. Government dietary advice, as depicted by the Eatwell Guide, is that we should choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions of starchy carbohydrates wherever possible.

■ Clinical Trials

Chi Onwurah:

[8600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that clinical trials across all disease areas are resilient to disruption from future outbreaks of covid-19 and other pandemics.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

On 23 March 2021 the Government published its vision for the future of clinical research delivery in the United Kingdom. This includes the aim to create a research system resilient to future public health emergencies through the use of innovative trial designs and with the support of digital solutions and systems. To support this vision, we have identified five key themes which underpin the improvements we will take forward in the coming years as follows:

- Clinical research embedded in the National Health Service;
- Patient-centred research;
- Streamlined, efficient and innovative research;
- Research enabled by data and digital tools; and
- A sustainable and supported research workforce.

An implementation plan and strategy setting out how the Government will begin to deliver the vision will be published later this year.

Chi Onwurah: [\[8601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients were recruited to clinical trials in each NHS Trust in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network (CRN) supports the set-up and timely delivery of commercial and non-commercial studies in England. The number of people participating in research studies on the NIHR's CRN portfolio is shown in the following table:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
970,840	813,860	1,549,185

■ Clinical Trials: Equality

Chi Onwurah: [\[8599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all people across the UK have equal opportunities to take part in clinical research.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) also places an emphasis on research activity following patient need including ensuring research is conducted in those parts of the country with the greatest disease burden. The NIHR's Clinical Research Network (CRN) supports the set-up and delivery of commercial and non-commercial studies and trials across in England, enabling people to participate in relevant research across the country. All National Health Service trusts in England were involved in research supported by the CRN last year.

On 23 March 2021 the Government published its vision for the future of clinical research delivery in the United Kingdom. This aims to create a research system in which everyone has the opportunity to participate in clinical research, participation is as easy as possible and research is delivered where the patients have greatest need. An implementation plan and strategy setting out how the Government will begin to deliver the vision will be published later this year.

■ Community Nurses: Recruitment

Mr Steve Baker: [\[R\] \[4589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the recruitment of community nurses; and what assessment he has made of the potential role of community nurses in the integration of healthcare and social care.

Jo Churchill:

A specialist community and public health nurse apprenticeship has been launched, which offers a new direct route into the profession. The Chief Nursing Officer England together with Director for Community Services at NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to the development of a National Community Nursing Plan.

■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients**Mick Whitley:**[\[10656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of people detained under the Mental Health Act between 1983 and 2000 who were misdiagnosed with (a) schizophrenia and (b) any other psychiatric disorder.

Mick Whitley:[\[10657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that clinicians engage with the concerns of people detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 who believe that they have (a) been misdiagnosed and (b) wrongly medicated.

Mick Whitley:[\[10658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to provide (a) financial, (b) medical and (c) psychological support to people who have been wrongly diagnosed or medicated while detained under the Mental Health Act.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no such estimate.

Patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 for three months, who have not consented to treatment or believe they have been wrongly diagnosed or medicated, have the right to a second opinion from the Second Opinion Appointed Doctor service provided by the Care Quality Commission. The Government's White Paper, Reforming the Mental Health Act, published in January 2021, includes proposals to enhance patient rights to this service.

For certain patients detained under the Act for treatment, there is a right to aftercare services, funded jointly by the responsible clinical commissioning group and local authority. These serve to help support the person when they move back into the community on discharge from hospital and aim to reduce the risk of the person becoming unwell and needing to return. Financial support may be available through personal health budgets, which support a person's identified health and wellbeing needs and are planned and agreed between them, their representative and the local National Health Service team. They provide individuals with greater choice, control and flexibility over their care. All these services can include medical and psychological support to meet the needs of people who may have been wrongly diagnosed or medicated.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[7893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to tackle the stigma associated with being sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have published our proposals to reform the Mental Health Act 1983 and we will also be looking at policy and practices around the legislation and the support provided to support and help individuals sectioned under the Act, including through advocacy and culturally appropriate provision.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Caroline Lucas: [\[1039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the internal lessons learned review on the covid-19 pandemic.

Clive Lewis: [\[1134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason he has not published the internal review conducted by civil servants on lessons learned from the covid-19 pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

We are unable to provide the information requested as it relates to the ongoing formulation of Government policy.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Hilary Benn: [\[10167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of covid-19 tests (a) which have been lost in transit and (b) where the results have not been reported to the person who took the test, in the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

No estimate has been made.

Caroline Lucas: [\[6248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the turnaround time is for variant sequencing following a positive covid-19 test; and what the average timeframe is for positive variant cases being communicated to public health teams at local authorities.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Test and Trace utilises genomic sequencing and rapid genotyping assays to detect variants of COVID-19. For genomic sequencing, the time from a positive test to variant detection is less than six days in 90% of cases. Rapid genotyping assay is being deployed across the entire National Health Service and Lighthouse Laboratories network and will detect and alert health protection response groups, including public health teams at local authorities, to the presence of a targeted known variant of concern within 48 hours from a positive test result.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Clive Efford:** [\[10139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with NHS England on the rate of (a) covid-19 vaccination and (b) supply of vaccines in London compared to the rest of England; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has regular discussions with NHS England on the vaccination programme and the supply of vaccines, including in particular locations, such as London. Specific data on uptake is being monitored to drive and improve the national deployment plan. This is shared daily with local authority directors of public health to enable them to see emerging trends and act quickly to any developing inequalities locally. This is the case for all areas across England.

The Government is in close contact with vaccine manufacturers and remains confident that the supply of vaccines to the United Kingdom will not be disrupted. We remain on track to offer a vaccine to all adults by the end of July.

Clive Efford: [\[10143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure a consistent supply of vaccines to those areas in London on the watch-list for the Delta variant of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccines are supplied on a consistent basis to all regions within England on a weekly basis and have been throughout the programme. Each integrated care system works with borough management teams and local Directors of Public Health to allocate the supply to sites, considering a number of factors, including infection rates. An additional 92,000 Pfizer vaccines were made available to the region and 60,000 doses were allocated to North West London, which had high rates of infection/surge testing.

Rachael Maskell: [\[347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people have reported side effects from the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccination.

Rachael Maskell: [\[348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people have reported side effects from the Pfizer covid-19 vaccination in each month since the covid-19 vaccination program began.

Rachael Maskell: [\[349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have reported side effects from the Moderna covid-19 vaccine in each month since start of the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Yellow Card Scheme is the system used in the United Kingdom for reporting adverse drug reactions (ADRs). This acts as an early warning system for the identification of previously unrecognised adverse reactions and also provides valuable information on recognised ADRs, allowing the Commission on Human Medicines and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to identify and refine the understanding of risk factors that may affect the clinical management of patients.

As of 5 May 2021, 55,716 Yellow Cards have been reported for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine which has administered an estimated 20.1 million doses, or a proportion of 0.277%.

For the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine 167,141 Yellow Cards have been reported against an estimated 30.8 million doses administered, or a proportion of 0.543%.

There have been 1,081 Yellow Cards reported for the Moderna vaccine with an estimated 0.1 million doses administered.

There have been 606 Yellow Cards reported where the brand of the vaccine was not specified.

Mr David Davis:[\[8540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the NHS app's storing of vaccination data on civil liberties.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

When individuals use the NHS App to demonstrate their COVID-19 vaccine status, the data is not stored within the app, but is made available to the app temporarily without any access to their General Practitioner records. COVID-19 status data can be viewed during 'live' access, held temporarily for the duration of their login.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed on the COVID-19 vaccine status service, which is provided through the NHS App, to assess and mitigate privacy and data security risks, including risks to civil liberties.

In addition, a full Equalities and Health Impact Assessment was completed on the digital and non-digital routes for the certification service in advance of the national launch to assess the impact of the products on groups with protected characteristics.

The Data Protection and Equalities and Health Impact Assessments are both kept under review as the service is developed.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[8715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the timescale between first and second covid-19 vaccinations.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England (PHE) is evaluating the effectiveness of short and long vaccination schedules and will report the findings in due course. PHE has reported vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease, hospitalisation and death using two doses in the weekly COVID-19 vaccine surveillance reports, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-surveillance-report>

As the majority of individuals in the United Kingdom received their second dose with the extended schedule, these results largely reflect extended schedules. These findings suggest that effectiveness is at least as high as that reported elsewhere where shorter dosing intervals are being used.

■ Dementia: Carers**Daniel Kawczynski:****[10280]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the importance of personalised care for people affected by dementia.

Helen Whately:

Personalised care and support planning is supported by 'Dementia: Good Care Planning – information for primary care and commissioners' which sets out the development of care and support planning following an initial holistic assessment of a person's health and well-being needs within the context of their whole life and family situation. The guide is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/dementia-good-care-planning-information-for-primary-care-and-commissioners/>

■ Dental Services and Prescriptions: Mothers**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[8712]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to review its decision not to extend NHS maternity exemption certificates as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government has no plans to do so. 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.

■ Dental Services: Pregnancy**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[8711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to compensate (a) pregnant women and (b) those who have had a baby in the last 12 months who were unable to access free dental treatment as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

We have no plans to do so. Urgent National Health Service dental provision was available from over 600 urgent dental centres while high street practices were closed during the first national lockdown period. All dental practices have been able to reopen from 8 June 2020 to provide the full range of treatments as clinically necessary.

■ Disability: Children**Helen Hayes:****[10530]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the capacity of the health system to provide the (a) therapies and (b) support that disabled children may have missed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made. In 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance making clear that restoration of essential community services, including therapeutic support, must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or who are going through an assessment for one. 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.

■ Disability: Coronavirus**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[8718]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the experience of people with disabilities or learning difficulties when accessing covid-19 tests through test centres.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: We are focused on making the experience of taking a COVID-19 test as straightforward as possible. NHS Test and Trace continues to work with charity partners reviewing a range of potential products and other improvements for all our customers.

NHS Test and Trace encourages consideration of all site attendee needs, both amongst staff and customers. Region Leads and Site Managers are frequently

advised about the importance of disability and learning difficulty awareness and of the need to provide adequate training to staff.

Training that covers dealing with disabilities and learning difficulties is frequently reviewed to ensure that civilians who require a bespoke testing response (due to a disability or learning difficulty) are provided for. In instances where civilians have difficulty in understanding the guidance for performing a test, onsite staff can talk anyone through the process, so that they are able to perform the test satisfactorily. Further training is being planned to engender the improvement of the experience of civilians with disabilities and learning difficulties who attend testing sites.

■ **Drugs: Manufacturing Industries**

Helen Hayes: [\[10533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of representation of pharmaceutical corporations on the General Pharmaceutical Council on regulatory oversight in the pharmaceutical industry.

Helen Hayes: [\[10534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of appointing a statutory regulator to regulate the UK pharmaceutical industry.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

The General Pharmaceutical Council regulates pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain and has no role in regulating the pharmaceutical industry.

■ **Health: Disadvantaged and Sickle Cell Diseases**

Alex Norris: [\[7922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking as part of the NHS covid-19 recovery plans to (a) reduce health inequalities and (b) support patients with sickle cell disease.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

COVID-19 has exerted an unprecedented strain on the National Health Service, however the NHS is working incredibly hard to keep services going throughout this pandemic for all patients, including those with sickle cell disease. To help kickstart recovery, the Government is providing £1 billion to incentivise providers to address backlogs and tackle long waiting lists; this is accessible through the Elective Recovery Fund. In May, NHS England also launched a £160 million initiative to tackle waiting lists. The Department will continue to support the NHS to deliver the maximum amount of elective activity possible. The Minister for Equalities is leading work to take forward the response to tackle COVID-19 disparities experienced by

individuals from an ethnic minority background, including people with sickle cell disease, and recently published her third report to the Prime Minister.

■ Huntington's Disease

Gareth Thomas: [\[8529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) raise awareness of Huntington's Disease among (i) NHS leaders and (ii) general healthcare professionals and (b) help them to provide services that support people with that disease.

Gareth Thomas: [\[8530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Huntington's Disease UK; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[8531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to support Huntington's Disease awareness month; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are committed to improving the lives of those who live with rare diseases including Huntington's disease. We published the new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework in January 2021. The new Framework provides the high-level direction for rare diseases in the UK over the next five years and increasing awareness of rare diseases among healthcare professionals is identified as a key priority.

The Framework will be followed by nation-specific action plans, developed in close consultation with stakeholders, including patient representative groups such as Genetic Alliance UK, of which Huntington's disease Association are a member.

Patients with Huntington's disease have access to a range of services, including the services of their general practitioner, associated health professionals, neurology services, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, local mental health services for patients and their families, palliative care where appropriate and online resources. NHS England also commissions neuropsychiatry services for adults and children which provide assessment and treatment for patients with conditions such as young onset dementia including Huntington's disease.

■ Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review

Afzal Khan: [\[2439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 16 March 2021 to Question 166465, on Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, if he will provide a timeframe for the further responses to that review.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government will respond in full to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review later this year.

Independent Reconfiguration Panel: Reform**Munira Wilson:****[10674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with local authorities on the impact of proposed reforms to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel as set out in the Health and Social Care White Paper.

Edward Argar:

We are continuing to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, following the recent publication of the White Paper.

Medical Records: Data Protection**Margaret Greenwood:****[8635]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to inform the public on the General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GP DPR) service from NHS Digital that will share data from people's medical histories with third parties from 1 July 2021; and what steps people should take to opt out of that service.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: NHS Digital is promoting this new data collection through their website, engagement with media, through stakeholder and patient groups and on social media channels. They have sought to raise awareness of the collection and its importance to the health and care system, but also to provide patients with a choice if they do not want their data to be used in this way.

Patients have a right to register a Type 1 Opt-Out directly with their general practitioner (GP) practice, and may also choose to register a National Data Opt-Out, which is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/general-practice-data-for-planning-and-research>

Margaret Greenwood:**[8636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement on General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GP DPR) service for data sharing of medical histories with third parties, whether those third parties include (a) private companies and (b) charities.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: Any organisation or individual can request data from NHS Digital and their request will be assessed through the Data Access Request Service to ensure that there is an appropriate legal basis for us to share data. The collected General Practice Data for Planning and Research data will be pseudonymised before it leaves general practitioner practices and made available for

research and planning according to the same criteria as all other reference sets held at NHS Digital. Data is only shared with organisations who have a legal basis and meet strict criteria to use it for local, regional, and national planning, policy development, commissioning, public health and research purposes.

All applications for access to this data must have a health or care benefit and cannot be for solely commercial purposes. NHS Digital will not approve requests for data where the purpose is for marketing purposes, including promoting or selling products or services, market research or advertising.

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[8637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement on General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GPDPR) service from NHS Digital on sharing data on medical histories with third parties, whether individual patients' personal details will be identifiable to third party users.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The General Practice Data for Planning and Research service will not collect patients' names or exactly where they live. Any other data that could directly identify them, for example NHS number, local patient number, full postcode and date of birth, is pseudonymised by general practitioner (GP) system suppliers on behalf of GP practices using pseudonymisation software. This means that these data items are replaced with unique codes and patients cannot be directly identified in the data which is shared with NHS Digital. The data is also securely encrypted.

■ **Medicine: Research**

Helen Hayes:

[\[10526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase the NHS's capacity to conduct medical research; and if he will take steps to increase NHS staff's access to dedicated research time.

Edward Argar:

On 23 March 2021 the Government published its vision for the future of clinical research delivery in the United Kingdom. This aims to create a research positive culture across the National Health Service and all health and care settings, where all staff feel empowered and supported to participate in clinical research delivery as part of their job, offering rewarding opportunities for all healthcare staff and exciting careers for those from all professional backgrounds who lead research. An implementation plan and strategy will be published later this year.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[10240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, dated 12 April 2021 on quarantine hotels, reference ZA56235.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 7 June 2021.

■ Mental Health**Sajid Javid:****[8580]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to build on the promotion of connecting with nature as part of Mental Health Week 2021 in its future work on mental health.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Our “COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan” recognises the important role that access to green spaces plays in supporting our mental health, and it outlines a range of work carried out by Government departments to increase access to green spaces.

This includes through testing green social prescribing through the Preventing and tackling mental ill health through green social prescribing project. This £5.77 million cross-Government project will test green social prescribing in seven sites, run national research work to understand scalability, and deliver a robust project evaluation. The project will work with communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and is running from October 2020 until April 2023. It will increase our understanding of how nature-based activities such as community gardening projects and green exercise can meet the needs of people with, or at risk of developing, mental ill health and help to inform future policy development.

■ Mental Health Services: Children**Abena Oppong-Asare:****[7962]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the level of demand for mental health services by (a) children under the age of 16 and (b) 16 to 18 year olds.

Abena Oppong-Asare:**[7963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase mental health services provision for (a) children under the age of 16 and (b) 16 to 18 year olds.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No specific assessment has been made.

Through the NHS Long Term Plan we will invest at least an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health services by 2023/24, which will see a further 345,000 children and young people a year able to access support through National Health Service-funded services including school and college-based mental health support teams by 2023/24. We have also announced an additional £79 million in this financial year to significantly accelerate the planned expansion of children and young people’s mental health services.

■ Mental Health Services: Ethnic Groups

Helen Hayes:

[10524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve community engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to help tackle inequalities in mental health services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

As outlined in the Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 to 2023/24, all local health systems are expected to set out how they will address inequalities in access and outcomes for groups with protected characteristics, including ethnicity by 2023/24. To support this, NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned the Advancing Mental Health Equality resource for local commissioners and providers to identify and address inequalities in mental health care. This guide is available at the following link:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/nccmh/amhe/amhe-resource.pdf

As part of our proposals on reforms to the Mental Health Act 1983 we have committed to introducing a new Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework. This will support National Health Service mental healthcare providers and local authorities to work with their local communities to improve the ways in which patients of diverse ethnic backgrounds access, engage with and experience mental healthcare.

■ Mental Health Services: Newcastle upon Tyne

Chi Onwurah:

[8602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve waiting times for mental health treatment assessments in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We recognise the impact of the pandemic on mental health services. To improve referral to treatment assessment times for adult mental health services in Newcastle upon Tyne, a robust triage rota has been put in place, along with a revised approach to booking assessment appointments and clearer route to step 4 pathway for patients with more complex presentations. In addition, more staff have been recruited and options explored around improving access including digital options to 'self screen'.

Nearly £750,000 was earmarked in 2020-21 for improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) service improvements and waiting list initiatives, and the benefits from this are expected to be seen during the current year. In addition, the Clinical Commissioning Group has earmarked over £600,000 for investment in dementia and older people crisis services to meet demand and alleviate service pressures.

For children and young people's mental health services, over £900k additional funding has been provided to Voluntary Sector providers 2020/21 to increase the support to children and young people in addressing their ongoing mental health needs.

■ NHS 111

Justin Madders: [\[10441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the evaluation of the 111 First service.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that evaluation of the programme is still ongoing.

■ NHS: Racial Discrimination

Stella Creasy: [\[8593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many cases relating to racial discrimination by the NHS under the Equality Act 2010 have found in favour of the complainant since 2010.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: The information requested is not held.

■ Obesity

Alex Norris: [\[7909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what responsibilities Integrated Care Systems will have for the delivery of obesity services; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Norris: [\[7910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of development of Integrated Care Systems on obesity services; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Norris: [\[7911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with relevant stakeholders on improving patient access to obesity services through the development of Integrated Care Systems; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Norris: [\[7912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what responsibilities Integrated Care Systems will have for the delivery of (a) Tier 3 weight management services and (b) Tier 4 weight management services; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: Local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are currently responsible for commissioning weight management services. The proposed Health and Care Bill will establish statutory Integrated Care Systems (ICS), made up of an Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Partnership

(together referred to as the ICS). The Integrated Care Board will take on the commissioning functions of the CCGs, including those that relate to tier 3 and tier 4 weight management services.

ICSs will strengthen partnerships between the National Health Service and local authorities, and with local partners, including groups representing the public and patient perspective, the voluntary sector, and wider public service provision. This will enable more joined up planning and provision, both within the NHS and with local authorities, enhancing the weight management services people receive.

We have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals contained in the Integration and Innovation White Paper. This has been invaluable in informing our policy development and we will continue with this engagement as we finalise the legislation. An impact assessment for the Health and Care Bill will be published in due course.

■ Pharmacy

Feryal Clark: [\[10692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to preserve the future sustainability of pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework five-year deal agreed in 2019 with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, commits £2.592 billion annually to the sector. The Department continues to closely monitor the market and engage with the sector.

■ Pregnancy Tests and Thalidomide: Congenital Abnormalities

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[2924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 638, on Independent Review, what assessment the Government has made of the causal association between (a) Thalidomide and (b) oral hormone pregnancy tests with congenital malformations; and what comparative assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of awarding financial support to people affected by (a) Thalidomide and (b) oral hormone pregnancy tests.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: Thalidomide is a powerful human teratogen, inducing a high frequency of severe and life-threatening birth defects. Many lines of evidence have confirmed the causal link of exposure to thalidomide in pregnancy with congenital malformations. Consequently, thalidomide must never be used by women who are pregnant or by women who could become pregnant unless all the conditions of the Pregnancy Prevention Programme are met. The evidence for a possible causal association between hormone pregnancy tests (HPTs) and birth defects was considered by an Expert Working Group of the Commission on Human Medicines which published its findings on 15 November 2017. Based on this review, the Expert

Working Group concluded that based on the totality of the data, the scientific evidence does not support a causal association between the use of HPTs and birth defects or miscarriage.

Work is ongoing to consider recommendation 4 of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report, which included a proposed redress scheme for hormone pregnancy tests. This work includes looking at a range of existing schemes, including for thalidomide.

■ Prostate Cancer

Alex Norris: [\[7918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many qualified non-medical practitioners are working as part of the NHS Prostate Cancer Workforce in England as at 26 May 2021; and how does that figure compare to the average number of those practitioners in 2019.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

■ Social Services

Munira Wilson: [\[10675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the frequency with which he expects to use the reformed intervention powers set out in Point 5.84 of the Health and Social Care White Paper.

Edward Argar:

The reconfiguration proposal creates a new call-in power which allows the Secretary of State to intervene at any point of the reconfiguration process.

We expect the current local process to continue to apply in most instances. However, there are a minority of cases, where there is a significant cause for public concern or it is particularly complex, which may benefit from Ministerial intervention.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists

Philip Davies: [\[10272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 165, what steps he has taken to record the number of urgent operations cancelled since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

The collection of data on cancelled operations has remained paused in order to release capacity across the National Health Service to support the ongoing pandemic response.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Clive Efford:** [\[10141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of vaccinating workers in hotels being used to quarantine people who have recently arrived from abroad; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In line with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's advice, workers in hotels used as managed quarantine facilities are being called for vaccination according to their age and clinical risk along with the rest of the population. They will not be prioritised based on their occupation. The vaccination programme is currently on track to offer a first dose to all adults over 18 years old by the end of July.

HOME OFFICE**■ Au Pairs: EU Nationals****Hilary Benn:** [\[10161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in what circumstances an EU citizen coming to the UK as an au pair requires a work permit.

Kevin Foster:

Now free movement has ended, the UK's immigration system does not distinguish between EEA and non-EEA nationals.

As has been the case since 2008, successive governments have decided the UK's immigration system will not offer a dedicated visa route for au pairs.

Any person seeking employment as an au pair in the UK requires permission to do so via an appropriate visa route with general work rights.

■ Drugs: Misuse**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[10671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2021 to Question 7944 on Drugs: Misuse, if she will publish any correspondence received from (a) the Lord Advocate, (b) the Crown Office and (c) Scottish Government Ministers on the use of drug consumption rooms in Scotland.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office has not received any direct representations from the Lord Advocate or the Crown Office on the issue of drug consumption rooms and currently has no plans to publish correspondence received from Scottish Government Ministers on this subject.

Tackling drug misuse is a priority for this government and we are clear that action is needed across all four nations to reduce the harms caused. We are committed to

working across the UK and have regular contact with the Scottish Government at ministerial and official level on this issue

■ **G7: Cornwall**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[10606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to protect police officers who are not yet vaccinated against covid-19 who are part of the reported deployment of 5000 additional officers to Cornwall for the G7 summit being held between 11 and 13 June 2021; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The health and safety of all staff and attendees at the Summit, and local residents in Cornwall, is paramount. Government will take all necessary measures to ensure that the G7 Summit is fully COVID-secure.

The roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines is being delivered in line with the guidance of the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). This prioritises those who are most likely to suffer the most serious health outcomes as a result of catching the virus, where age is assessed to be the most significant factor. Police officers will continue to be vaccinated in line with the JCVI-guided prioritisation, and many have received at least a first dose ahead of the G7 Summit.

During the Summit, the Government will implement a comprehensive range of measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This includes keeping numbers attending to a minimum and requiring all those travelling from abroad to provide a negative test pre-departure.

Everyone involved in the Summit, including police officers, will undergo regular testing. Venues will be configured to enable social distancing, and face coverings and other measures will also be in place.

We recognise the importance of Personal Protective Equipment for all of those on the frontline and continue to work with the police to ensure officers receive the essential equipment they need in order to carry out their jobs safely.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[10607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the G7 summit being held in Cornwall between 11 and 13 June 2021, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) potential risk of covid-19 infection to people who (i) live close to and (ii) are attending that summit, (b) the potential effect of that summit on the spread of the Indian variant and (c) the potential risk of covid-19 infection to younger police officers deployed to that summit who have not been vaccinated; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The health and safety of all staff and attendees at the Summit, and local residents in Cornwall, is paramount. Government will take all necessary measures to ensure that the G7 Summit is fully COVID-secure, and review them as appropriate.

For the Summit, the Government has implemented a comprehensive range of measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This includes keeping numbers attending to a minimum and requiring all those travelling from abroad to provide a negative test pre-departure. Everyone involved in the Summit, including police officers, will undergo regular testing. Venues will be configured to enable social distancing, and face coverings and other measures will also be in place.

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■ Immigration: Afghanistan

Jessica Morden:

[\[10255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support the Government is providing to Afghanistan-based spouses of Afghan interpreters who are based in the UK in cases where the marriage occurred after the interpreter re-settled in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Government recognises the vital role of interpreters in operations in Afghanistan. This is why there are two dedicated schemes designed to help them relocate to the UK: the ex-gratia scheme and the Afghan relocations and assistance policy (ARAP). Over 1,300 former Afghan interpreters, and their family members, have been relocated to the UK under these schemes since 2014.

Under the immigration rules, only partners and dependent children under the age of 18, who are not married or leading an independent life are eligible under the relocation schemes.

We will consider exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis taking into account the level of risk faced and family dependencies.

Those who apply and are approved for relocation are brought to the UK as soon as suitable accommodation has been sourced and support arrangements are in place.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Rachael Maskell:

[\[10491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on how UK citizens who have been working in the EU and have a spouse or partner from the EU can acquire settled status for their spouse or partner if their return date to the UK is after the closing date for settled status.

Kevin Foster:

Eligible British citizens who were resident in an EEA country or Switzerland by 31 December 2020 may return to the UK with their close family members until 29 March 2022.

Family members can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) or for an EU Settlement Scheme family permit to come to the UK before 29 March 2022. Following a successful application to the EUSS, they would be eligible for settled status after five years. The relationship must usually have existed before 1 February 2020 for family members to be eligible to apply. Full information can be found on GOV.UK:

www.gov.uk/family-permit/eu-settlement-scheme-family-permit-join-a-british-citizen

After 29 March 2022, a spouse or partner will need to apply under the UK's family Immigration Rules and, if successful, would qualify for settlement in five years. Full details can be found on GOV.UK here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-fm-family-members

■ Migrants: Detainees**Hilary Benn:****[10166]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department collects figures on the number of people detained in short-term detention facilities run by (a) UK border force and (b) contractors at airports and ports.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes statistics on people in detention on the last day of each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release\(opens in a new tab\)](#)'. Data on people in detention under immigration powers, are published in Table Det_03a of the '[Detention summary tables\(opens in a new tab\)](#)', which includes those detained in residential short term-holding facilities. Figures on people in detention at the end of March 2021 were published on 25 February 2021.

Border Force does not have a standalone short-term holding facility detention system. The only recording capability is via CID/Atlas. All cases are entered onto these systems when an individual has been issued with an IS91 Authority to Detain form.

Figures on the number of people detained in contractor operated short-term holding facilities at airports and ports are collated locally by the contractor. We do not hold a central record of these figures.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance**John Spellar:****[7728]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle crash-for-cash car insurance fraud.

Kevin Foster:

The Government is aware criminals are committing these crimes, without any regard to the safety of fellow road users. We are clear this is unacceptable, and it is a priority to ensure these fraudsters have no space to operate.

The City of London Police's Insurance Fraud Enforcement Department (IFED) works tirelessly to bring 'Crash for Cash' criminals to justice. Since the unit was established, investigations conducted by IFED have led to the convictions of hundreds of insurance fraudsters.

We, law enforcement and private sector partners continue to provide advice to the public on how to avoid these crimes and what to do they have fallen victim.

The Government has agreed to work with the private sector to develop a new action plan to tackle fraud, including insurance fraud, to close vulnerabilities in the system and to strengthen the law enforcement response.

■ National Retail Crime Steering Group

Anna McMorrin: [\[10574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings she has had with members of the National Retail Crime Steering Group since July 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

Meetings of the National Retail Crime Steering Group were held on 20 January and 28 April 2021.

■ Sexual Harassment

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[10546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to criminalise public sexual harassment.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government takes all forms of harassment extremely seriously.

There are a number of existing laws which make sexual harassment which occurs in a public place illegal. Depending on the circumstances of the case, these include offences within the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Public Order Act 1986 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Our previous Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy included sexual harassment for the first time and we will be publishing a new strategy this year to help strengthen our response to these crimes.

■ Undocumented Migrants

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[10547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants' report entitled We Are Here: routes to

regularisation for the UK's undocumented population, published in April 2021, whether the Government plans to (a) implement recommendations made in that report, (b) introduce new routes to regularisation and (c) remove barriers that can result in migrants becoming undocumented.

Kevin Foster:

There are already several options available for those in the UK without lawful leave to regularise their status. The Immigration Rules set out the requirements to be met to qualify for a right to remain which provides clarity for applicants and decision makers alike. There are also discretionary policies for leave to be granted outside the Immigration Rules in exceptional circumstances.

We welcome feedback and regularly engage with our partners and stakeholders on a wide range of issues, including regularisation of undocumented migrants, and we have noted with interest the recommendations made by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. Existing provisions continue to be reviewed following recommendations in the Law Commission report on Simplification of the Immigration Rules.

■ **Visas: Food Supply**

Jonathan Edwards: [\[10320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to skills shortages in the food processing sector, for what reason (a) fishmongers, (b) butchers and (c) poultry processors are not included in the Skilled workers visa shortage list.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[10321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to occupation code 3414, Dancers and choreographers, of the Skilled worker visa shortage occupations list published 6 April 2021, how many dancers and choreographers the UK is short of.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[10322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to occupation code 3411, Artists, of the Skilled worker visa: shortage occupations list published 6 April 2021, how many artists the UK is short of.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[10323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to occupation code 3415, Musicians, of the Skilled worker visa shortage occupations list published 6 April 2021, how many musicians she estimates the UK is short of.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary wrote to the Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee on 23 October 2020 setting out the Government's response to their review of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL).

The UK labour market is changing as a result of Covid, with many facing uncertainty or a need to find new employment. We are therefore taking time to assess how it has

changed before making further changes to the shortage occupation list as our immigration policies should be considered alongside our strategy for the UK Labour Market, not separately or as an alternative to them. A copy of the full letter can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-the-mac-on-the-shortage-occupation-lists-report>.

The Migration Advisory Committee review of the SOL, published on 29 September 2020, sets out the rationale for recommending jobs which should be added to the SOL. This is based on several factors and not just the number of vacancies. A full copy of the report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-shortage-occupation-list-2020>

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Evictions

Ian Byrne:

[10693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many households were at risk of bailiff enforcement in (a) Liverpool West Derby constituency and (b) England as of 1 June 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department does not hold information on the total number of households which were at risk of bailiff enforcement on 1 June 2021.

However, the latest published figures on warrants issued show that there were 2,480 warrants of possession issued to landlords and 43 warrants of possession issued to mortgagors in England and Wales in January to March 2021. The volume of mortgage possession warrants issued was down 99% compared to the same Quarter in 2020, whilst the volume of landlord possession warrants issued was down 80% on Q1 2020. Repossessions in mortgage cases were down almost 100% compared to the first quarter of 2021, whilst repossessions in landlord cases were down by 96%. Across all claim types, there were 37 warrants of possession issued in the Liverpool Local Authority area in Q1 2021, compared to 234 in Q1 2020. The statistics are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-january-to-march-2021/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-january-to-march-2021>

Ian Byrne:

[10696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what impact assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the reintroduction of bailiff enforcement from 1 June 2021 on homelessness.

Eddie Hughes:

Bailiffs are now able to enforce an eviction if a landlord has a valid warrant of possession. This reflects the gradual easing of national restrictions and ensures that landlords are able to exercise their right to justice. The bailiff measures were appropriate at the height of the pandemic to help control the spread of infection but these restrictions could only ever be temporary. They prevent landlords from repossessing properties when they have valid grounds to proceed.

The latest statistics for the first quarter of 2021 show that the volume of possession claims by landlords is down by 74% compared to the same quarter in 2020. This suggests that landlords are bringing significantly fewer claims for possession than before the pandemic. The reduction in claims means that fewer cases will proceed to the stage at which someone could be evicted, compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Where an eviction is scheduled, this will not be carried out by bailiffs if they are made aware that the tenant or anyone they live with has coronavirus symptoms, has tested positive for Covid-19, is waiting for a test result, or has been instructed by the NHS to self-isolate.

To mitigate against the accumulation of rent arrears and associated possession action, the government has put in place an unprecedented financial package. This includes support for businesses to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which has been extended until the end of September 2021, continued support for low income households with an extension of the £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit until the end of September, and maintaining Local Housing Allowance rates at the increased level applied in April 2020 in cash terms.

Tenants will further be protected through longer notice periods, as landlords are now required to serve four months' notice in all but the most serious cases, giving them more time to find alternative accommodation.

The latest homelessness statistics covering the period October - December 2020 show a 40% decrease in households owed a homelessness duty due to the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy compared with the same period in 2019.

Where a person is at risk of losing their home, local authorities have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness. In 2021/22 we are providing local authorities with £310 million to discharge their duties under the Act, a £47 million increase on previous years funding. This can be used to offer financial support for people to find a new home, to work with landlords to prevent evictions, or to provide temporary accommodation to ensure families have a roof over their head. This underlines the government's commitment to fully enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 by ensuring councils have the funding they need to prevent homelessness and help more people sooner.

Ian Byrne:

[\[10697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what impact assessment his Department has made of the effect of reintroduction of bailiff enforcement from 1 June 2021 on the risk of covid-19 transmission.

Eddie Hughes:

The ban on bailiff enforcement has now been lifted, reflecting the gradual easing of national restrictions and ensuring that landlords are able to exercise their right to justice. Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, which runs the bailiff service, has worked with the Ministry of Justice's Health and Safety team and Public Health England to ensure that measures are put in place to protect all parties to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission during the enforcement of possession.

Where an eviction is scheduled with the mandatory minimum notice period of 14 days, the tenant can inform the court if they or anyone they live with has coronavirus symptoms, has tested positive for Covid-19 or are waiting for a test result, or has been instructed by the NHS to self-isolate. Where this is the case, the appointment will be rescheduled for a later date with a minimum of 14 days' notice. The tenant can also apply to suspend the eviction in certain circumstances, for example where they were unable to attend the original hearing and would have had a good chance of defending the claim for possession had they done so.

When carrying out an eviction, the bailiff will follow the latest Public Health England and government guidance. They will conduct the eviction wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and maintain social distancing. They must ask if anybody in the household has symptoms, is self-isolating or shielding. If that is the case, or if the bailiff observes any visible symptoms of Covid-19, then they must withdraw from the property immediately. Bailiffs also will not evict if the household is quarantining in line with government guidelines on return from an amber list country, and the eviction will be rescheduled. Bailiffs have also been asked to undertake regular Covid-19 tests and not to attend work if they or anyone they live with has tested positive for Covid-19.

■ **Housing: Greater London**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[10415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many dwellings were granted planning permission in the London Borough of Hillingdon between 2018 and 2019.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[10416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many dwellings that were granted planning permission in the London Borough of Hillingdon between 2018 and 2019 have been completed.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[10417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the number of dwellings in each London borough which were granted planning permission between 2018 and 2019; and if he will provide a breakdown of that number for each London borough.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[10418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the number of dwellings in each London borough which were granted planning permission and completed between 2010 and 2019; and if he will provide a breakdown of that number for each London borough.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[10419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the number of dwellings in each London borough which were granted planning permission between 2010 and 2019; and if he will provide a breakdown of that number for each London borough.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not collect data on numbers of dwellings granted planning permission by local authority. Numbers of residential planning applications granted and numbers of housing completions at local authority level are publicly available on Gov.uk.

Members: Correspondence**Rosie Cooper:** [\[10241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question WPQ 180453, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 5 March 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, resent on 19 April 2021, on flooding to underpasses in Skelmersdale, reference ZA55528.

Luke Hall:

A reply was sent to the Hon Member by the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government on 26 April in response to letters from her about flooding underpasses. This also addressed the points raised by the Hon Member in her letter of 5 March to the Prime Minister.

Private Rented Housing: Advertising**Steve McCabe:** [\[10159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the powers available to local authorities to regulate the length of time letting agents are allowed to retain letting signs outside properties once the property is off the market.

Eddie Hughes:

The erection of boards advertising property sales and lettings by estate agents and landlords is controlled under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Boards must be removed not later than 14 days after completion of the sale or granting of the tenancy and where conditions are not met, enforcement action can be taken.

A local planning authority can choose to place more stringent control over advertisements by introducing stricter controls in defined areas (following approval from the Secretary of State) or by issuing a discontinuance notice.

■ Rents: Arrears**Ian Byrne:**[\[10694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of households with 4 months' or more accumulated rent arrears as of 1 June in (a) Liverpool West Derby Constituency and (b) England.

Eddie Hughes:

Data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) Household Resilience Study November-December 2020 suggested that 1% of private renters were 2 months or more behind. Additionally, approximately 3% of social renters were 2 months or more behind.

The Department does not hold information about the number of households with 4 months' or more accumulated rent arrears in Liverpool West Derby Constituency.

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

Ian Byrne:[\[10695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the potential number of households that will be in 2 months' or more accumulated rent arrears as of 1 August 2021 in (a) Liverpool West Derby constituency and (b) England.

Eddie Hughes:

Data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) Household Resilience Study November-December 2020 suggested that approximately 1% of private renters were

2 months or more behind. Additionally, approximately 3% of social renters were 2 months or more behind. Most renters in arrears had arrears of less than 2 months.

We do not hold data on the potential number of households that will be in 2 months' or more accumulated rent arrears as of 1 August 2021 in Liverpool West Derby constituency.

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

■ Temporary Accommodation

Kate Hollern: [\[10400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle out-of-area temporary accommodation.

Kate Hollern: [\[10401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many people there are in out-of-area temporary accommodation.

Eddie Hughes:

While local authorities aim to secure permanent accommodation for families, time spent in temporary accommodation means people are getting help and ensures no family is without a roof over their head.

The legislation and guidance set out that in the first instance, local authorities should try to place individuals within their own area, and retain established links with schools, doctors, and other key services and support. However, when this is not possible, they should place the household as near as possible to the original local authority. Placing a household out of the local authority area should be as a last resort and authorities must consider the impact a change in location would have on a household.

If a local authority places a household into accommodation in another local area, they are required by law to notify the local authority of any placement, to ensure there is no disruption to schooling or employment for example.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Beef: Exports**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[10199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of which nation the UK exports the most beef to.

Graham Stuart:

According to HMRC, the top destination for UK beef in 2020 was Ireland with an export value of £119.3 million.

■ Overseas Trade: Belarus

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[10480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much her Department spent on trade finance support programmes to Belarus in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) does not invest equity or provide funding into projects. The support provided by the Department is in the form of financing, insurance or guarantees for loans.

UKEF has provided export insurance policy cover for UK exports to Belarus. As no claims have been made on those policies, UKEF has not incurred any outlay. The beneficiary of this insurance is the UK exporter, and not Belarus.

■ Trade Agreements: Algeria

Emily Thornberry: [\[10236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress she has made on rolling over the trade agreement in place before 1 January 2021 with Algeria; and whether she plans to (a) seek to remove or (b) amend the clause in that agreement relating to duty drawback and exemption to exclude its application to the UK's new freeports.

Greg Hands:

The Government has made it clear that it is open to re-engage with Algeria to discuss new trading arrangements. Through the UK Embassy in Algiers, the Government maintains an open dialogue to address barriers to trade collaboratively with Algeria on a case-by-case basis. The Government will continue to carefully assess and negotiate the terms of all future trade agreements, such as clauses related to duty drawback, in order to secure provisions that benefit all of the United Kingdom, including producers in the UK's new freeports.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Theresa Villiers:

[\[10220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that the interests of the UK farming sector are taken into account in negotiations for a free trade agreement with Australia.

Greg Hands:

The Government is working to secure an ambitious free trade deal with Australia that benefits businesses across the UK.

Any deal signed with Australia will include protections for the agriculture industry and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise high standards. Tariffs for sensitive goods can be staged over time, with safeguards built in. Australian meat accounts for a very low proportion of total UK imports, and Australian meat imported into the UK is produced to high standards.

The Government keeps farmers and senior figures from across industry closely involved throughout all trade negotiations through the Trade Advisory Group (TAG). This allows closer engagement, so the Government better understands their views and the impact of each deal on the industry.

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

Theresa Villiers:

[\[10221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to include review mechanisms in a potential free trade agreement which could be agreed with Australia to ensure matters relating to agriculture can be regularly reviewed to help ensure they are operating fairly.

Greg Hands:

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

The Government is currently involved in agreeing the outstanding details of this negotiation with the aim of reaching agreement in principle with Australia later this month. The Government has an objective to provide for regular review of the operation of the whole agreement. The agreement will provide forums for an ongoing dialogue between Australia and the UK to raise and discuss matters relating to agriculture in future.

The Government's goal is a long-term sustainable future for British farming, based on high standards, competitiveness, and productivity, which meets the growing demand for the UK's world-class produce.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:[\[10244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 3839, whether work on a potential trade agreement with Australia has been prioritised as part of the full focus on recovering from the covid-19 pandemic.

Greg Hands:

Free trade and resilient supply chains through open markets will be crucial to the global economic recovery as the coronavirus crisis passes.

The biggest regional benefits from an ambitious UK-Australia trade agreement, as modelled in the deeper scenario of our Scoping Assessment, are expected to go to Scotland, the North East and the North West of England, the West Midlands, the South East and London.

A trade agreement with Australia will help to reduce trade barriers and drive increased two-way trade in goods. A UK-Australia trade agreement will be an important part of the UK's post-COVID economic strategy, making it easier for businesses to access goods, services, and capital to fuel economic recovery, and growth.

■ Trade Agreements: Bosnia and Herzegovina**Emily Thornberry:**[\[10237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress she has made on rolling over the trade agreement in place before 1 January 2021 with Bosnia and Herzegovina; and whether she plans to (a) seek to remove or (b) amend the clause in that agreement relating to duty drawback and exemption to exclude its application to the UK's new of freeports.

Emily Thornberry:[\[10238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress she has made on rolling over the trade agreement in place before 1 January 2021 with Montenegro; and whether she plans to (a) seek to remove or (b) amend the clause in that agreement relating to duty drawback and exemption to exclude its application to the UK's new of freeports.

Greg Hands:

The Government has regularly offered Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro an agreement that would provide continuity for business, and on the same terms as the EU Agreement.

The Government understands that the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are considering their position and the Government remains ready to conclude a trade agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina when they are able to do so.

Following last year's elections and formation of a new government in Montenegro, and with the COVID-19 situation there now improving, the Government stands ready to open discussions.

The Government will carefully assess and negotiate the terms of all future trade agreements, such as clauses related to duty drawback, to secure provisions that benefit all of the United Kingdom, including producers in the UK's new freeports.

■ Trade Agreements: Japan

Emily Thornberry: [\[10233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 1279 on Trade Agreements: Japan, what discussions with Japanese authorities were required prior to the UK's application for the addition of new geographical indications; and what changes resulted from those discussions.

Greg Hands:

Article 14.34.5 of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) sets out consultations should occur prior to adding additional geographical indications (GIs) for protection under the CEPA. These consultations took place to agree the modalities of exchanging lists of new GIs.

Emily Thornberry: [\[10234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 1279 on Trade Agreements: Japan, on what date officials in her Department began discussions with Japanese authorities on the addition of new geographical indications; and which unit in her Department was responsible for those discussions.

Greg Hands:

Official discussions began on 2 February 2021 and involved Department for International Trade officials in the Trading Systems and Trade Negotiations Groups.

Emily Thornberry: [\[10235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 1279 on Trade Agreements: Japan, on what date officials in her Department ordered the translation of technical documents necessary to apply for the addition of new geographical indications; and which unit in (a) the Government or (b) an external agency provided those translation services.

Greg Hands:

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was responsible for ordering the translation of technical documents. DEFRA awarded the contract for the translation of geographical indication technical documents to a single external company, Acuity Translations on 2 December 2020.

JUSTICE

■ Legal Aid Scheme

Mr Nicholas Brown: **[10168]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure the regional equity of legal hourly rates recovery.

Chris Philp:

In England and Wales, the general position as to recovery of legal costs in civil litigation is that the losing party pays the costs of the winning party. If these costs are not agreed, then they are assessed on principles and bases set out in the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR), which apply equally across England and Wales.

Under CPR 44.4, the place where the work was done is one of the factors to be taken into account by the court in deciding the amount of costs.

Guideline Hourly Rates (GHR), published by the Master of the Rolls, provide a starting point for the summary assessment of costs, based on the experience and the location of the lawyer undertaking the work.

In January 2021, the Civil Justice Council (CJC), chaired by the Master of the Rolls, issued a draft report for consultation on proposed revisions to the GHR:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210108-GHR-Report-for-consultation-FINAL.pdf>. The consultation closed on 31 March 2021.

■ Magistrates: Allowances

Jonathan Edwards: **[10319]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to introduce a mileage allowance which reflects the additional costs incurred by magistrates living in rural areas in undertaking their duties.

Chris Philp:

All magistrates can claim a mileage allowance as set out in the magistrates' expenses policy. The rates for this allowance (per mile) are:

CAR	MOTORCYCLE	BICYCLE	PASSENGER
Single 45p rate for the first 10,000 miles, 25p thereafter	24p	20p	5p

These rates were introduced in April 2021 after a wider review of magistrates' expenses. They reflect the recommended rates set by HMRC for tax purposes. The new rates are also used by the wider public sector, including the judiciary and the Civil Service.

As these rates are deemed by HMRC to be the appropriate amount to offset the cost of using private vehicles for business purposes, the Ministry of Justice has no plans to introduce an additional mileage allowance for magistrates.

■ Sexting

Mrs Maria Miller:

[\[10207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Law Commission plans to publish its report on Taking, Making and Sharing intimate images without consent; and what the Government's timescale is for taking forward the recommendations of that report.

Chris Philp:

Activities involving the taking and sharing of intimate images are captured by existing offences, for example those tackling revenge pornography, voyeurism, harassment, malicious communications, blackmail, and coercive or controlling behaviour.

To strengthen further the law in this area, the Government recently announced that the "revenge porn" offence will be extended to capture those who *threaten* to disclose such material. Provisions to extend the parameters of the offence in this manner were introduced in the Domestic Abuse Act.

The provisions will come into force two months after Royal Assent: on 29 June this year.

However, the Government recognises that there is concern over the growth of new technology and the impact on the law in this area.

We have asked the Law Commission to review the law in this area to ensure victims are properly protected. The Law Commission published a public consultation to this review on 26 February this year.

The consultation period ended on 27 May and I understand the Law Commission intends to publish its findings by Spring 2022.

The Government awaits the Law Commission's findings with interest and shall consider them carefully.

SCOTLAND

■ Energy: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[\[10486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions has he had with representatives of (a) Scottish Renewable Energy Companies and (b) the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of an Innovation Power Purchase Agreement to stimulate growth of marine and tidal projects.

Mr Alister Jack:

Ministers of the Office for the Secretary of State for Scotland meet regularly with representatives of Scottish renewables companies to discuss a range of energy

matters of importance to Scotland. Policy on marine and tidal projects is a matter for the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

TRANSPORT

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Theresa Villiers: [\[10222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce the cost of covid-19 testing for people wishing to travel to green list countries.

Robert Courts:

We are working with the travel industry and private testing providers to see how we can further reduce costs for the British public while ensuring travel is as safe as possible. We are considering a range of options including cheaper tests being used when passengers return home. The price of tests has reduced significantly in recent weeks, with some providers offering testing packages for green arrivals starting at £43.

Rachael Maskell: [\[10492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 3056 on Coronavirus: Screening, what discussions officials in his Department have had with relevant stakeholders on covid-19 testing provision at York Station, in particular in the context of York being a major tourist location.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

London North East Railway (LNER), responsible for the management of York station, were eligible to register for the workplace asymptomatic testing scheme by the 12 April deadline.

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), who represent the train operating companies (TOCs) including LNER. The rail minister, Chris Heaton-Harris, wrote to RDG earlier this year encouraging the take up of workplace testing.

■ **Driving Tests: Coronavirus**

Tim Loughton: [\[10137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is taking to clear the backlog for learner drivers wanting to take their driving test following 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.

■ **Driving Tests: Highlands of Scotland**

Drew Hendry:

[\[10484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the DVSA on using alternative testing sites in the Highlands for driver theory tests to increase test availability.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is aware there has been an unprecedented demand for theory tests in Scotland. The DVSA is working with its theory test provider, Pearson VUE, to explore ways in which it can increase theory test capacity in Scotland, including extending opening hours and running tests on extra days where possible.

The DVSA is continuing to work with the Scottish Government but as a result of the 2 metre physical distancing restrictions in Scotland, as required by the Scottish Government, it is unable to increase the number of desks used to take tests.

The DVSA and its theory test contract provider, Pearson VUE, have explored the possibility of delivering the theory tests outside of existing sites, but this was found to be not suitable as it is dependent upon a physical infrastructure within the Pearson VUE network.

■ **Ferries: Cyprus**

Grahame Morris:

[\[10330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last met representatives of the Maritime Register of Cyprus to discuss maritime safety standards on Cypriot registered ferries operating on international routes from UK ports.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State for Transport has not met with officials from the Maritime Register of Cyprus to discuss maritime safety standards on Cypriot registered ferries operating on international routes from UK ports.

Cypriot registered vessels are inspected by Marine Surveyors from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency as part of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control to ensure that the vessels comply with the relevant safety standards and regulations.

■ **Irish Ferries: Conditions of Employment**

Grahame Morris:

[\[10328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of Irish Ferries' planned operation of cross-Channel ferry services on the

terms and conditions of employment of UK seafarers on ferry services between Dover and ports in France.

Robert Courts:

The Department has not made an assessment of the potential effects of Irish Ferries' planned operation of cross-Channel ferry services on the terms and conditions of employment of UK seafarers on those services. The Dover-Calais route is an international route, the vessel that Irish Ferries are bringing to the route is currently registered with Cyprus and subject to Cypriot law.

■ **Irish Ferries: Staff**

Grahame Morris: [\[10327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of seafarer (a) officer and (b) ratings jobs that will be created in the UK from Irish Ferries' planned operation of cross-Channel ferry services later in 2021.

Robert Courts:

The Department has not made any formal assessment on the number of seafarer jobs that will be created in the UK from Irish Ferries planned operation of a Channel ferry service. It is understood that the provision of a third operator on the Dover-Calais route has resulted in a small number of new jobs in the Port of Dover.

Grahame Morris: [\[10329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of Irish Ferries' planned operation of cross-Channel ferry services on the number of UK (a) officers and (b) ratings in training each year.

Robert Courts:

The training of seafarers and the nationality of those seafarers is a commercial decision for the operator and no assessment has been made on the potential effect of Irish Ferries planned operations for Dover-Calais on the number of UK officers and ratings trained each year.

■ **Large Goods Vehicles: Parking**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[10214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the total number of overnight parking spaces available to Heavy Goods Vehicle drivers in (a) the UK and (b) Kent.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department for Transport published a survey of lorry parking in England which estimated that there are 15,012 spaces available. These included lorry parks (including Motorway Service Areas), industrial/retail estates and laybys within 5 kilometres of the strategic road network.

The data was recorded by region and not by county.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[10215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the demand for overnight parking spaces available to Heavy Goods Vehicle drivers in (a) the UK and (b) Kent.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department for Transport published a survey of lorry parking in England which estimated that there were 18,670 vehicles were found to be parked overnight. The total capacity of spaces in lorry parks and Motorway Service Areas was found to be 15,012.

The data was recorded by region and not by county.

MS Isle of Inishmore**Grahame Morris:**[\[10326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the Port State Control inspection of the Irish Ferries' vessel, Isle of Inishmore, which is planned to operate on the Dover to Calais route later in 2021.

Robert Courts:

The Isle of Inishmore is not due a Port State Control (PSC) inspection until 30 November 2021. However, when the vessel formally declares its intention to operate on the new route, the French maritime authorities are obliged to carry out a pre-commencement inspection under the EU ferry directive (2017/2110).

The MCA will carry out a PSC inspection on or after 30 November at an appropriate time in Dover.

Public Transport: Season Tickets**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[10710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage people to use public transport instead of private cars; and what assessment he has made of the benefits of introducing flexible season tickets for commuters.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 15 March the Government launched England's long-term National Bus Strategy, setting out a bold vision for bus services across the country. Backed by £3 billion of transformational funding, the strategy's central aim is to get more people travelling by bus, by making services more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper. The Williams-Shapps Rail Review was launched in May and set out a series of measures to support the government's vision for the UK to have a world-class railway, recognising that the railways must become better at meeting passenger needs to avoid a society dependent on the car.

We recognise the need to provide better value and a more convenient option to meet the needs of flexible commuters, which is why we are introducing new rail flexible

season tickets across England. These tickets will be available to purchase on 21 June and valid from 28 June, and will offer most 2 and 3 day per week commuters savings against buying daily tickets or traditional seasons. Transport for Wales Rail currently offers the Multiflex product to support flexible commuters in Wales.

■ Railway Stations: Tickets

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[10583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the policy paper entitled Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail, published by his Department on 20 May 2021, what estimate he has made of the total number of ticket offices broken down by ticket office category that (a) are operational in June 2021 and (b) are planned to be open in 2025.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In respect of Part (a)

As collected by Network Rail, the current number of ticket offices by station category, is shown in the following table:

NETWORK RAIL CATEGORIES KEY	NUMBER OF TICKET OFFICES
A National Hub	87
B Regional Interchange	209
C Important Feeder	280
D Medium staffed Station	317
E Small Staffed Station	404
F Small Unstaffed	53
Total	1,350

In respect of Part (b) This will be a future consideration for Great British Railways.

■ Railway Stations: Visual Impairment

Kate Hollern: [\[10402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to speed up the installation of tactile paving at Network Rail-run train stations.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I have asked Network Rail to develop a programme to aim to install platform edge tactile strips on every platform in Great Britain.

I will make a further announcement in due course.

■ Railways: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[10581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the report entitled Transport User Community – role of staff in passengers feeling safe, published by Transport Focus on 7 October 2020 that there is a strong sense that the ideal response to the pandemic would be to see more staff on trains and at the station, rather than less.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

During the course of the pandemic, the Department has worked closely with train operating companies and Network Rail to ensure that staff and passengers are kept safe when travelling on the railway, and recognises the important role which rail staff play in ensuring passengers feel safe when travelling. Government has published Safer Travel guidance, which supports transport operators to understand how to provide safer environments for both staff and passengers. Train operators understand their markets and their customers' travel patterns and have redeployed rail staff whose work has been affected by the pandemic into different roles, including into stations to support passengers.

■ Railways: Pay

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[10584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the policy paper entitled Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail, published by his Department on 20 May 2021, proposes that the Office of Rail and Road will publish data on rail workers salaries.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[10585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the proposal that the Office of Rail and Road will publish data on rail workers salaries in the policy paper entitled Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail, published by his Department on 20 May 2021, whether that data will include salaries of (a) employees of Great British Railways, (b) employees of operators of Passenger Service Contracts, (c) subcontracted staff on passenger service contracts, (d) employees of railway infrastructure sub-contractors, (e) workers on zero hours contracts, (f) railway infrastructure workers who are classified as self-employed, (g) agency railway workers, (h) workers on zero hours contracts and (i) employees of open access operators.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[10586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the policy paper entitled Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail, published by his Department on 20 May 2021, whether trade unions have been consulted on the proposal for the Office of Rail and Road to publish data on rail workers salaries.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

A modern and sustainable rail industry will benefit from increased transparency and the ability to compare its practices with similar sectors.

■ Road Traffic Offences: Mobile Phones

Jessica Morden: [\[10249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to ensure that all drivers who use mobile phones to film or take photographs whilst driving are prosecuted.

Jessica Morden: [\[10250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that drivers who browse the internet whilst driving face prosecution.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has consulted on changing the law to broaden the offence of using a mobile phone while driving. We are currently analysing the consultation responses.

Our objective in putting forward a proposal to change the law, was to ensure that the offence of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving reflects the real world where smart phones or devices are used not only for calls and texting (interactive communication), but also for scrolling play lists, taking photographs, or drafting emails (standalone functions).

Additionally, broadening of the offence will facilitate enforcement by obviating the need for the police to demonstrate that any use they identified from the roadside involved interactive communication.

TREASURY**■ Business: Tax Avoidance**

Bridget Phillipson: [\[10354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of HMRC's Large Business Directorate since its establishment in the context of his Department's 2014 strategy on Tackling aggressive tax planning in the global economy; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The UK has been at the forefront of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project, which aims to curb international tax avoidance and reduce tax lost, including introducing the Diverted Profits Tax (DPT).

As at 31 March 2020, HMRC had secured over £6 billion of additional tax revenues through the impact of DPT rules, and had a further 100 investigations under way into multinationals' arrangements considered to divert profits out of the UK, with a total amount of tax under consideration of £5.3bn.

In the March 2021 Budget, the Chancellor announced a review of tax administration for large businesses, in order to examine large businesses' experience of UK tax administration and explore improvements including for tax compliance.

■ Customs Grant Scheme

Imran Hussain: [\[10420\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to extend the Customs Grant Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Customs Grant Scheme first opened in December 2018 and all funding made available through the latest round has now been applied for. There are currently no plans to extend the scheme further.

Imran Hussain: [\[10421\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications his Department has received for the Customs Grant Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Since the first wave of the Customs Grant Scheme opened in December 2018 up to 1 June 2021, over 14,500 applications have been received.

Imran Hussain: [\[10422\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications to the Customs Grant Scheme have been successful.

Jesse Norman:

Since the first wave of the Customs Grant Scheme opened in December 2018 up to 1 June 2021, over 8,500 applications have been successful.

Imran Hussain: [\[10423\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding his Department has allocated to businesses under the Customs Grant Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Since the first wave of the Customs Grant Scheme opened in December 2018 up to 1 June 2021, a total of £81 million has been made available to businesses through the scheme. To date, over £69 million has been paid in total across all waves of the grant.

■ Disease Control

Bridget Phillipson: [\[10346\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 188144 on Government Assistance: Coronavirus, what work (a) has been completed, (b) is in progress and (c) is planned on using the experience gained by his Department during the covid-19 pandemic to inform contingency plans for potential future pandemics, including recurrences of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

Thanks to people's hard work and sacrifice, supported by the success of the vaccine rollout, there is now a path to reopening the economy. We will continue to take a flexible but cautious approach as we review restrictions, ensuring support reflects the easing of restrictions to enable the economy to bounce back as quickly as possible.

The Treasury looks to learn from experience on a continuous basis across all areas of Department business, including its response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We keep all impacts and policies under review.

Financial Services: EU Action**Ed Davey:**[\[10151\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the EU's sustainable finance action plan; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that the financial services sector in the UK is competitive in sustainable finance.

John Glen:

The UK supported the development of the EU Sustainable Finance Action Plan whilst a member state and has committed to match its ambition in the UK. The Green Finance Strategy, published in 2019, set out a comprehensive approach to greening the financial system, mobilising finance for clean and resilient growth, and capturing the resulting opportunities for UK firms.

We have so far delivered on and exceeded the ambition set out in that Strategy: We have set up the Green Finance Institute; become the first major country to mandate TCFD disclosures; committed to implement a green taxonomy; and signalled our intention to issue a Green Gilt at a total of £15bn and will also offer an innovative retail savings product alongside it.

We've augmented the Government's Economic Objectives and the remit of the principal financial regulators to support environmental sustainability and the transition to net zero, and established the UK Infrastructure Bank with a mandate to tackle climate change.

On the international stage, taking advantage of our role as President, we recently secured commitment of the G7 to support moving towards mandatory climate-related financial disclosures, to bring others up to our level of commitment. As we work towards COP26 we have established the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, to foster ambition and action for Net Zero in the finance sector and are supporting the convergence and development of international standards in sustainable finance through working with the IFRS and the International Platform on Sustainable Finance.

Government Departments: Theleme Partners**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[10355\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what work (a) Theleme Partners LLP (OC347655) and (b) partners in that company have undertaken for (i) his Department, (ii)

other Departments and (iii) organisations for whose operations he is responsible to Parliament since 13 February 2020.

John Glen:

No work was undertaken by this company for HM Treasury, HM Revenue and Customs and their Executive Agencies in the timeframe requested.

Information for other Treasury Arms Length Bodies is not centrally available.

Procurement decisions for these bodies are made independently of HM Treasury, with each accountable officer ensuring compliance with the regulations.

■ **Investment**

Ed Davey:

[\[10152\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of report by the Asset Management Taskforce's entitled *Investing with Purpose: placing stewardship at the heart of sustainable growth*, published in November 2020.

John Glen:

The UK is a world leader in stewardship standards and the report produced by the Economic Secretary's Asset Management Taskforce, *Investing with Purpose*, builds on that existing leadership.

The report endorses the Financial Reporting Council's internationally respected UK Stewardship Code as best in class, and recommends to UK government, regulators and industry how to further embed and improve stewardship standards and the consideration of environmental, social and governance factors.

The UK Government has already taken actions which speak to recommendations made in the report. In November 2020, the Chancellor announced the UK's intention to make disclosures aligned with the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) fully mandatory in the UK across the economy by 2025, with a significant portion of mandatory requirements in place by 2023. The UK has also taken on board the recommendation to support international efforts to enhance and harmonise sustainability reporting standards, playing an instrumental role in securing important G7 commitments to move towards making climate disclosures mandatory across G7 economies.

The clear recommendations in the report apply across the investment chain and will continue to further enhance the UK's stewardship regime, ensuring that asset managers are focused on delivering long-term, sustainable benefits for investors, the economy, the environment and society.

■ Landfill Tax

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[10185\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 78 on Landfill Tax, how the £1.563bn yield was calculated; and how his Department defines the risks referred to.

Jesse Norman:

The yield is the total financial impact flowing from HMRC interventions in relation to landfill tax, as recorded on HMRC management information systems. It includes additional tax paid to HMRC, tax losses prevented, financial penalties and estimated additional future tax flowing from the interventions.

The risks that this yield flowed from were mainly suspected evasion or avoidance of landfill tax, but also include situations where interpretation of the law is disputed by HMRC and the tax paying entity.

■ Premium Bonds: Prize Money

John Healey:

[\[10160\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial impact on savers with a National Savings and Investments (NS&I) account after the reduction of the premium bond prize fund rate from 1.4 per cent to 1 per cent in December 2020.

John Glen:

In setting interest rates for its products, NS&I must balance the interests of savers, taxpayers and the broader financial services sector.

With unprecedented Government funding requirements in 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic measures and amid significant uncertainty and volatility in the retail savings market, NS&I experienced unprecedented upside pressures on its Net Financing. In the first six months of 2020-21, NS&I raised a total of £38.3 billion of Net Financing for the Government, so a decision was taken to reduce the Premium Bond rates to mitigate the risk of NS&I exceeding its £35 billion (+/- £5 billion) Net Financing target.

More broadly, it is important that Government takes into account taxpayer value considerations when making financing decisions. With gilt yields at low levels for the majority of the past year, the Government financing raised through NS&I has been more expensive than that raised through gilt issuance.

■ Scottish Government: Borrowing

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[10670\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2021 to Question 7284 on Scottish Government: Borrowing, if he will publish the (a) date and (b) detail of any request he has received from the Scottish Government on the extension of borrowing powers since 2015.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Government has frequent discussions and correspondence with the Scottish Government on a variety of issues. The UK Government does not publish details of all of these discussions.

However, as set out in my previous answer, the UK Government agreed significant new borrowing powers for the Scottish Government in 2016.

■ Tax Avoidance**Drew Hendry:****[10485]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the use of umbrella companies to employ contractors does not lead to a repeat of the IR35 disguised remuneration tax situation for those contractors employed through umbrella schemes.

Jesse Norman:

As a result of the changes to the off-payroll working rules some businesses are reconsidering whether Personal Service Companies are still the best way to engage contractors who are working like employees. Some will choose to engage contractors in a different way, such as through an agency or umbrella company. Most umbrella arrangements are set up and operated correctly, and comply with tax, National Insurance Contributions and National Minimum Wage legislation, but there are some that are not compliant. HMRC have published guidance for people working through umbrella companies, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-through-an-umbrella-company>.

The Government remains committed to tackling those who promote disguised remuneration schemes, including through a package of measures to strengthen existing anti-avoidance regimes and tighten the rules designed to tackle promoters and enablers of tax avoidance schemes. These measures are being legislated for in the current Finance Bill.

In addition, on 23 March 2021, the Government launched a consultation on a further package of measures to tackle promoters. These include ensuring HMRC can protect their position by securing or freezing a promoter's assets so that the penalties they are liable for are paid, tackling offshore promoters and the UK entities that support them, closing down companies that continue to promote avoidance schemes and disqualifying the directors involved, and supporting taxpayers to identify and steer clear of avoidance schemes.

HMRC have launched a publicity campaign targeted at contractors to help them spot and steer clear of tax avoidance and HMRC have also proactively contacted 17,000 businesses highlighting the support available that they can share with contractors.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality Act 2010

Grahame Morris:

[\[10331\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will introduce an enforcement mechanism for the Equality Act 2010 for circumstances where a disabled person does not have the financial means to enforce their rights in civil court.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is committed to ensuring effective access to judicial and/or administrative procedures in the courts for everyone, including disabled people, who think they have experienced discrimination.

As with all civil law in Great Britain, enforcement of the Equality Act 2010 falls to the individual or their agent or representative and the question of cost is one of the factors that must be weighed in their decision whether to proceed.

Legal aid for legal advice and representation may be available, subject to means and merits tests, for cases alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has powers to assist someone bringing a case under the Equality Act 2010, and uses these powers to intervene in cases which it considers to be of strategic importance. Any individual who requires advice on disability issues generally or in relation to service provision can contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service for free bespoke advice provision. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) also provides free and impartial advice to disabled employees/candidates in relation to employment-related disability cases.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Offices

David Linden:

[\[10596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the cost of the rapid estates expansion programme; and how long those temporary offices are due to remain open.

Mims Davies:

For commercial reasons, the Department is unable to provide any information on the cost of the Rapid Estates Expansion Programme at this stage.

The Department cannot say how long the new sites will remain open as they are being used to temporarily supplement the existing Jobcentre network to help meet the current increase in demand for services - ensuring that there is the space to operate safely in the interests of both colleagues and customers. The short term leases provide flexibility, which will enable the Department to 'downsize / right-size' as the economy recovers and / or social distancing requirements are eased. If any of

the new sites offer better, more suitable, accommodation than our existing offices the Department may look to retain them.

■ Sign Language

Jessica Morden: [\[10252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to take steps to formally recognise British Sign Language in law.

Justin Tomlinson:

On 18 March 2003 the UK government formally recognised that British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right. Provision for accessing services by users of BSL are covered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Existing equality legislation already means employers, service providers and public bodies have to provide services in BSL and other formats when it is reasonable to do so. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the needs of all those with protected characteristics.

■ Social Security Benefits

Kirsten Oswald: [\[10427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications have been processed for (a) universal credit, (b) jobseekers allowance and (c) employment support allowance in each of the last three years.

Will Quince:

The available information for daily claims made to Universal Credit to 8 April 2021 is published and available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The available information for Jobseeker's Allowance monthly on-flows to April 2021 is published on the NOMIS website and available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home/newuser.asp>

Employment and Support Allowance Work Capability Assessments statistics for initial assessments, including those still in progress, by month of claim start to June 2020, are published in Table 1a of the data tables available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/esa-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessments-including-mandatory-reconsiderations-and-appeals-march-2021>

Kirsten Oswald:

[10431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what customer feedback procedures are used in assessing departmental performance in the administration of (a) universal credit, (b) jobseekers allowance and (c) employment support allowance.

Mims Davies:

The national customer experience survey is the vehicle DWP uses to assess customers' experiences with the services they receive from DWP. The survey seeks feedback from a range of DWP customers including ESA and UC customers. The last published survey can be found on DWP's research publication page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-claimant-service-and-experience-survey-2018-to-2019--2>

■ **Universal Credit**

Anne McLaughlin:

[10468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether easements in respect of universal credit introduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak will remain in place for the duration of that outbreak; and what discussions she has had with claimant groups on ensuring that the most vulnerable people are supported during that outbreak.

Will Quince:

Last year, the Department for Work and Pensions introduced a number of easements for Universal Credit claimants, to ensure they could continue to be supported while there were restrictions on face-to-face interaction. Some of these easements are still in place, while others have reverted back to business-as-usual procedures.

Additionally, to provide financial support with essential living costs to vulnerable people and those hardest hit during the COVID 19 outbreak, the Government is delivering an unprecedented package of support, injecting billions into the welfare system. This includes the temporary uplifts to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits, and boosting Local Housing Allowance by almost £1bn.

DWP provides a range of support to help vulnerable people, especially during the Covid period. Throughout the pandemic, Jobcentres have remained open for anyone who needs face-to-face support and cannot be helped in any other way, which includes all vulnerable claimants, and we have increased the number of work coaches to enable us to continue supporting vulnerable claimants and working with partners to ensure they get the help they need.

DWP regularly meet stakeholders in order to update them on a range of issues and will continue to do so.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Eighth Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt):

[\[HCWS78\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG), has today made the following written statement:

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met today, 9 June, at Admiralty House, London.

The meeting was co-chaired by the UK's Lord Frost and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič. The First Minister and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive and 27 Member State representatives attended.

The Committee received an update on the work of the Specialised Committees since the last meeting on 24 February, and discussed progress on Withdrawal Agreement implementation, with particular focus on the Northern Ireland Protocol and citizens' rights. The first Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee annual report was also agreed and signed, this will be published in due course.

The UK set out the extensive steps taken to operate the Protocol, by the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and by businesses in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

The UK made clear its readiness for continued constructive engagement to find pragmatic solutions that ensure the Protocol operates in a way that safeguards the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions, minimises its impact on the day-to-day lives of communities in Northern Ireland, and maintains the integrity of the EU's Single Market. The UK will continue to put forward ideas and options.

The UK underlined the urgency of a number of issues and noted it would continue to engage fully in discussions with the EU, with a view to finding substantial solutions to address the difficulties being caused by the Protocol in Northern Ireland. The UK would, however, continue to consider all options available for safeguarding peace, prosperity and stability in Northern Ireland.

The UK demonstrated its commitment to EU citizens living and working in the UK, where it has registered over 5 million people in the EU Settlement Scheme. The UK urged the EU to provide appropriate support to all eligible UK citizens living in the EU, particularly in EU Member States with upcoming deadlines for their residency schemes.

The UK restated its commitment to cooperating with the EU through the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee processes to make sure that pragmatic solutions are developed to implement all areas of the Withdrawal Agreement.

A post-meeting statement has been published on GOV.UK [here](#), giving a current assessment of the UK Government's view on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

■ **First Meeting of the Trade Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council**

Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt):

[\[HCWS77\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG), has today made the following written statement:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council met today, 9 June, in person and by video conference.

The meeting was co-chaired by the UK's Lord Frost and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič. The First Minister and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive, Minister for Culture, Europe & International Development of the Scottish Government, Minister for the Economy of the Welsh Government, and 27 Member State representatives attended.

The first meeting of the Partnership Council marks a new phase in the UK and EU relationship as sovereign equals.

The Partnership Council discussed sanitary and phytosanitary measures and customs and trade facilitation; fisheries; law enforcement; long-term visa fees; participation in Union programmes; and received an update on the institutional frameworks supporting the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The parties agreed an indicative timetable for upcoming meetings of the various joint committees established under the Agreement, and encouraged continuing work on the establishment of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly and the Civil Society Forum.

The Partnership Council supervises the operation of the TCA, providing strategic direction to the work of the Trade Partnership Committee and 18 Specialised Committees.

The UK restated its commitment to cooperating with the EU through the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council to ensure that all areas of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement were implemented.

A post-meeting statement has been issued on GOV.UK [here](#)