



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 June 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:48 P.M., 10 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

#### ■ Animal Free Research UK

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[8592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to engage with the work of Animal Free Research UK on reducing the use of animals in medical research.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Animal Free Research UK have recently shared their report: 'Modernising Medical Research: How Britain can become a global leader in animal free science'.

We are already taking steps to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research. This is an area that is carefully regulated and one that remains important in ensuring new medicines and treatments are safe. The Government believes that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and it actively supports and funds the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). This is achieved primarily through funding for the National Centre for the 3Rs, which works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of 3Rs technologies and ensure that advances in the 3Rs are reflected in policy, practice and regulations on animal research.

Since the NC3Rs was launched it has committed £100 million through its research, innovation, and early career awards to provide new 3Rs approaches for scientists in academia and industry to use.

#### ■ Electric Vehicles: Vans

**John Spellar:**

[\[8537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 3795 on Electric Vehicles: Vans, what steps his Department is taking to maximise the manufacture of electric vans in the UK.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government is continuing its longstanding programme of support to ensure that the UK automotive sector remains at the forefront of technological developments. The Government and Industry have jointly committed almost £1.5 billion through the Advanced Propulsion Centre and Faraday Battery Challenge to support the research, development, and manufacture of zero and low-emission technologies.

The Government's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) offers a comprehensive package of support to enable the take up of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) including vans. This will see nearly £1.5bn of support invested over the period 2015-2021. Demand for ultra-low emission vans is increasing, with an increase of more

than 70% in 2020 (5,863 new plug in van grant (PIVG) eligible vans registered), compared to 2019 (3,389).

In that time, ultra-low emission vans have risen from 1.0% to 2.1% of the new van market in the UK. Uptake has been boosted by 11 new models eligible for PIVG coming to market in 2020, including nine vans in the most popular large van segment.

## ■ Infrastructure: Iron and Steel

**Stephen Doughty:**

**[11567]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much UK-produced steel reinforcing bar was procured for Government-funded infrastructure projects in each of the last three years.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) collates and publishes annually information on how much steel is purchased for the Government's major infrastructure projects in the previous financial year, including what proportion is produced in the UK. This year's data was published on 19 May and can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/steel-public-procurement-2021](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/steel-public-procurement-2021).

The reported value of UK steel procured in 2019/20 for major public projects was £108m, a 33% increase on the previous year. BEIS will start collating data for 2020/21 in due course.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

**Peter Aldous:**

**[7808]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is planning to take to help the British steel sector to decarbonise.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Decarbonising UK industry is a core part of the Government's ambitious plan for the green industrial revolution. The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy published on 17 March, commits to work with the Steel Council to consider the implications of the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to 'set targets for ore-based steelmaking to reach near-zero emissions by 2035'.

Hydrogen, electrification, and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS) are the main technological options being examined as part of this process. The industry decarbonisation pathways technical annex of the strategy (pg. 153-155) presents two possible options for the decarbonisation of the iron and steel industry.

Our wide-ranging support for the steel sector includes: providing over £500m in recent years to help with the costs of energy; a £315m Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, which aims to support businesses with high energy use to cut their bills and reduce carbon emission; and our £250m Clean Steel Fund that will support the decarbonisation of the steel sector.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Zarah Sultana:**[\[11676\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Government intends to revisit its plans to lift covid-19 lockdown restrictions on June 21 2021 in light of new covid-19 variants.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

As set out by the Prime Minister, the Roadmap out of restrictions in England will be driven by data not dates. As set out in the Roadmap, it takes around four weeks for the data to reflect the impact of easing restrictions from the previous step, and the Government will provide a further week's notice to the public and businesses ahead of any further changes.

As set out in the Roadmap, step 4 will be no earlier than 21 June. On 14 June, the Government will review the latest data against the four tests set out in the Roadmap. The Government will then set out whether or not it is safe to move England to step 4 on 21 June.

**■ Earl Mountbatten of Burma: Disclosure of Information****Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[11456\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May to Question 2854 on the Mountbatten archive, what the terms were of the undertakings given by Lord Mountbatten in 1969 on the publication of the material in the archive; for what reason private diaries and letters that could have been sold on the open market are deemed to be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000; for what reason the full archive has not been made public a decade after its publicly-funded acquisition by Southampton University; what the timeline is for the publication of that part of the archive that remains currently unpublished; and if he will list the criteria according to which any part of the archive can be deemed to be too sensitive for publication.

**Julia Lopez:**

Before he retired as Chief of Defence Staff in 1965, the first Earl Mountbatten accepted that personal diaries could not be put into the public domain without first being vetted. Earl Mountbatten made clear that ownership of all of these papers would be handed over to the Broadlands Trustees. In 1969, the Broadlands Trustees entered into undertakings not to give general or particular access to these papers without the express permission of the Prime Minister of the day through the Cabinet Secretary. A copy of the Undertakings is available at the National Archives. In line with this agreement, the Cabinet Office is continuing to work with the University of Southampton to support the release of the Mountbatten archive whilst ensuring sensitive and official information is handled appropriately and in line with the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act.



This case is currently before the Information Tribunal. It would not, therefore, be appropriate to make further comment whilst this is subject to ongoing legal proceedings.

## ■ Influenza: Death

**Sir Charles Walker:** [\[11505\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will (a) list the calendar month for each year from 2004 to 2019 in which the most deaths attributed to seasonal flu occurred and (b) provide the figure for the number of flu deaths that fell within each of those months.

**Julia Lopez:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response PQ11505 [UKSA's final response to PQ11505.pdf]

## ■ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: Powers

**Chris Stephens:** [\[11585\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's powers in respect of the ability to proactively investigate systemic issues arising in the benefits system.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman operates according to his powers in the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967. This includes investigating complaints made by MPs on behalf of members of the public about the benefits system administered by the Department for Work and Pensions. The current legislation does not include powers to investigate any issues proactively and ministers have no plans to introduce such reforms at the current time.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Ajax Vehicles

**John Healey:** [\[11473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Ajax programme will reach full operating capability.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Work is ongoing to test the scheduled date for Full Operating Capacity (FOC) of 2025 in order to ensure there is a jointly agreed, risk adjusted schedule between General Dynamics and the Ministry of Defence, which will provide an agreed deliverable date to reach FOC. Any change to the FOC will be published in due course.

**John Healey:**

[\[11474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment has he made of the potential effect of the reduced 20mph speed limit for the Ajax armoured vehicles to travel safely on the (a) UK's operational capabilities and (b) protection of UK Forces from drone warfare.

**Jeremy Quin:**

In terms of the vehicle's speed, AJAX is capable of speeds up to 70KPH but an initial limitation of 30KPH was introduced as a control measure for newly qualified Household Cavalry Regiment crews. This is being reviewed and will likely be removed in July.

### ■ **Ajax Vehicles: Procurement**

**John Healey:**

[\[11472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what impact the delay in the Ajax programme will have on the British Army's capabilities over the next decade.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The current forecast initial operating capability, or IOC, is 30 June 2021, with a 50 per cent confidence, and a 90 per cent confidence for September 2021. To be clear, the Department will not take the programme into IOC until we are confident that we have achieved what we need to achieve at this stage of the vehicle's development.

I refer the right hon. Gentleman to my responses to his Urgent Question of 8 June 2021, in which I noted issues of concern on the vehicle which needed to be addressed. It is too early to provide an estimate of what impact this may have on the achievement of FOC, on which work is ongoing.

**Attachments:**

1. Ajax Programme Urgent Question [UQ - Ajax Programme.docx]

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[8559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the contractual Recast was between his Department and General Dynamics; when that Recast took place; and what that Recast did to change the contractual nature of the Ajax programme.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The contractual recast between General Dynamics and the Ministry of Defence was finalised in May 2019. The recast is based on an incremental delivery of capability with defined Capability Drops. The main principle is to provide progressive build to System Requirements Document compliance and add new capabilities to the vehicles.

### ■ **Apache AH-64 Helicopters: Guided Weapons**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[11496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Hellfire missiles were procured for the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter as part of the initial procurement of that programme;

and how many Hellfire missiles have been procured from the US since that initial procurement, by (a) type, (b) cost and (c) number.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence has procured a number of Hellfire Missiles (of different variants) from the United States Government for the Apache Mk1 system and is now in the process of procuring additional missiles for the new Apache 64E platform. Some of the existing Hellfire missiles procured for the Mk1 variant are being cleared for use on the new helicopter.

I am unable to share the quantities, variants and costs of Hellfire missiles procured, as to do so could prejudice the capability, effectiveness and security of the Armed Forces.

■ **Defence: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

**[10188]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the repercussions are for contracts that do not fulfil social value requirements under the terms of the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The implementation of the Social Value Model has been designed to fit within our existing government procurement processes. If tenderers do not demonstrate proposals to deliver specific additional Social Value benefits within their tender, as set out in the tender documentation, then they will receive a score of zero for the Social Value Model element of the tender evaluation.

Once a contract has been awarded, Social Value Model obligations are managed in the same way as any other contractual obligation through the Ministry of Defence contract management process. The exact detail will vary for different contracts but, where payment is linked to the performance of Social Value Model requirements, then non-performance will result in payments being withheld.

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

**[11493]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7747 on Fleet Solid Support Ships, to which Cabinet Office guidelines is he referring.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The guidance is detailed in Procurement Policy Note 11/16 - Procuring Steel in Major Projects - Revised Guidance, dated 13 December 2016.

The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-1116-procuring-steel-in-major-projects-revised-guidance>

## ■ Military Aircraft: Deployment

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[10171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will estimate the number of sorties by RAF (a) Typhoons, (b) Voyager, (c) Sentinel, (d) Rivet Joint and (e) E-3 Sentry in each month between January 2019 and May 2021.

**James Heappey:**

The number of sorties is provided in the table below:

<b>NO OF SORTIES</b>					
<b>PER MONTH</b>	<b>TYPHOON</b>	<b>VOYAGER</b>	<b>SENTINEL</b>	<b>RIVET JOINT</b>	<b>E-3 SENTRY</b>
January 2019	823	203	17	8	12
February 2019	830	140	13	7	6
March 2019	1003	203	19	7	1
April 2019	949	199	14	8	7
May 2019	940	189	11	13	0
June 2019	837	222	7	2	7
July 2019	1021	205	18	10	7
August 2019	881	193	7	9	5
September 2019	897	203	18	9	16
October 2019	925	210	17	8	11
November 2019	908	220	11	8	14
December 2019	675	202	7	5	5
January 2020	775	193	15	7	9
February 2020	768	194	16	5	7
March 2020	813	182	15	7	10
April 2020	817	152	4	3	7
May 2020	786	196	6	1	9
June 2020	910	198	11	3	10

<b>No of Sorties</b>					
<b>PER MONTH</b>	<b>TYPHOON</b>	<b>VOYAGER</b>	<b>SENTINEL</b>	<b>RIVET JOINT</b>	<b>E-3 SENTRY</b>
July 2020	1048	224	11	8	13
August 2020	809	188	14	4	10
September 2020	815	205	5	3	2
October 2020	836	212	9	3	2
November 2020	920	186	10	4	2
December 2020	659	177	13	4	3
January 2021	708	184	17	4	8
February 2021	694	143	7	4	9
March 2021	999	199	No Fly	8	12
April 2021	866	170	Disbanded	11	11
May 2021	829	193	Disbanded	11	14

#### ■ **Morocco and Western Sahara: Military Exercises**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[11684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the joint military manoeuvres with the USA, Italy, UK, Netherlands, Canada, Brazil, Tunisia, Morocco and Senegal will take place in (a) Morocco or (b) occupied Western Sahara.

**James Heapey:**

The Ministry of Defence can confirm that no UK personnel participating in Exercise AFRICAN LION will be conducting training in Western Sahara. The UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined.

#### ■ **Navy: Gulf of Guinea**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[11494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Royal Navy vessels are currently deployed as part of the Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade Co-operation Centre in the Gulf of Guinea.

**James Heappey:**

The Integrated Review outlines Her Majesty's Government's intention to contribute to wider maritime security, including in tackling piracy off the coast of West Africa as co-chair of the G7 Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group in 2021. This will include working with France in the Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade - Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GOG) information centre and with regional West African partners. Whilst no vessel is currently deployed, HMS TRENT will deploy to the Gulf of Guinea later this year.

**■ Oman: Demonstrations****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[11674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether (a) the Chief of the Defence Staff and (b) other UK military personnel have been in contact with the Omani authorities on the recent protests in that country.

**James Heappey:**

UK military personnel are in regular contact with the Omani authorities. Our close bilateral relationship allows us to share ideas and experience on all aspects of security including response to protests in line with the rule of law and respect for human rights. The Chief of the Defence Staff has not had any contact with the Omani authorities regarding the recent protests in that country.

**■ RAF Lossiemouth: Maritime Patrol Aircraft****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[11495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7751 on RAF Lossiemouth: Maritime Patrol Aircraft, on what date that Post-Flight Rinse Facility was introduced; at what cost that Facility was introduced; under what contract that Facility operates; whether that Facility is a fixed facility; and how often P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft have been washed at that Facility in the last twelve months.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Post-Flight Rinse Facility (PFRF) at RAF Lossiemouth was built by Volker Fitzpatrick and their sub-contractor InterClean under the Airfield Operational Surfaces project at a cost of some £2.8 million (excluding VAT) and is maintained under contract by Amey.

It is a fixed facility set into the aircraft servicing pan and was first used on 25 February 2021. Rinsing the aircraft at the PFRF after the day's final flight is a routine activity and is not separately logged.

**■ Special Forces: Data Protection****John Healey:**[\[11475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment has he made of the safety and security of personnel in the UK Special Forces after the reported leak of

details of 1,182 British soldiers through WhatsApp; and what steps is he taking in response to that data breach.

**John Healey:** [\[11476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel in the Special Forces have been affected by the recent reported leak of personal data onto WhatsApp groups.

**John Healey:** [\[11477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the identities of UK Armed Forces personnel are protected after the recent reported data breach through WhatsApp.

**John Healey:** [\[11478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will commission an internal review into how the personal data of UK Armed Forces personnel was leaked through WhatsApp in June 2021.

**James Heapey:**

The longstanding position of successive Governments is not to comment on UK Special Forces personnel as to do so would put those personnel and operations at risk.

An investigation into this matter is ongoing and is being conducted by the Royal Military Police. Additionally, internal processes are being reviewed as to how this type of data is handled and communicated within the Department.

The individuals affected by the breach, and their families, have been issued operational and personal security advice. Personnel have also been advised to adhere to further security advice provided by the MOD Counter Threat Advisory Team, which is continually updated and easily accessible to all Service personnel regardless of location and accessibility to MOD systems.

## ■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights and Military Intervention

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[11573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to The Government's Overseas Security and Justice Assistance Human Rights Guidance, if he will publish the record of assessments made of human rights risks and military engagement in Sri Lanka.

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[11574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance Human Rights Guidance, what assessment his Department has made of the human rights risks of reinstating the defence advisor post in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2019.

**James Heapey:**

We regularly review and update our Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) guidance to ensure that UK assistance and defence engagement is in line

with our values and is consistent with our domestic and international human rights obligations.

OSJAs are sensitive documents and disclosure could prejudice the UK's relations with foreign states. If OSJA assessments were to be put in the public domain we would lose the freedom to be completely candid in the assessment, undermining its purpose. OSJA assessments may also draw on material not publicly available that has been provided to the UK "in confidence" and disclosure could affect provision of such information in the future.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Gambling

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[10500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of problem gambling in (a) York, (b) North Yorkshire and (c) England.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[10502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the proportions of problem gambling disorders that result from gambling (a) in person and (b) online.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Health Survey for England 2018 showed that the problem gambling rate for Yorkshire and the Humber was 0.5% and 0.7% for the North East. The rate for England was 0.5%.

According to the 2016 Combined Health Surveys, the overall rate of problem gambling for adults in Great Britain was 0.6%. Among those who had engaged in any gambling activity the rate was 1.2% and for those who gambled online the rate was 3.5%. The surveys do not show causation but the proportion of those taking part in an activity who are considered problem gamblers.

### ■ Internet: Press

**Damian Green:** [\[10135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions the Government is having with other governments on the creation of international rules to ensure that online news publishers are fairly remunerated by technology companies for the news content they generate.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Fair and competitive digital markets sit at the heart of the government's strategy on press sustainability. Central to our plans in this area is our pro-competition regime for digital markets, which will include an enforceable code of conduct to rebalance the



relationship between publishers and platforms. No decisions have been taken on this yet but we expect to launch our consultation later in the year.

Given the global nature of digital technologies and markets, we recognise that we will be most effective if we work together. We therefore continue to monitor developments in this area internationally and to engage with other governments to understand their approaches.

We are discussing our approach to press sustainability in the context of digital markets with international partners through bilateral engagement and as part of our G7 presidency. The Secretary of State has raised the issue of press sustainability with his G7 counterparts with a view to promoting competitive, innovative digital markets while protecting the free speech and journalism that underpin our democracy and precious liberties.

## ■ **National Lottery: Rugby**

**Gary Sambrook:**

[\[10659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the announcement that the National Lottery will form a commercial partnership with the Rugby Football League, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the allocation of funds from the National Lottery promotional fund to that partnership on the ongoing Fourth National Lottery Licence Competition.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The National Lottery's partnership with the Rugby Football League is a commercial arrangement entered into by the current operator of the National Lottery under the terms of its current (third) licence. Promotional deals are a valuable part of the National Lottery proposition as they strengthen the National Lottery brand and associated positivity.

The Gambling Commission, as the independent regulator, approved the release of funding for a range of promotional deals such as this, as they were satisfied that in the short term, they would benefit National Lottery players (through relevant prizes), while over the longer term, they would generate benefits for the National Lottery brand. The budget is from a promotional fund, and is therefore separate from the money allocated to National Lottery good causes.

The Gambling Commission launched the competition for the 4th licence on 28 August 2020. The next licence comes into force in August 2023.

## ■ **Nuisance Calls**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[11717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department and associated regulatory authorities are taking to reduce nuisance automated marketing calls.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Companies that make marketing calls are regulated by both the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The PECR was designed to complement the DPA and impose strict obligations on organisations that make marketing calls to individuals in the UK.

The Government has taken a number of actions to tackle nuisance and automated marketing calls through amendments to the PECR. This includes introducing director liability and working with the Ministry of Justice and HM Treasury to ban cold calls from personal injury firms and pension providers. We also secured over £1 million to provide vulnerable people with call blocking devices.

The regulators Ofcom and the Information Commissioner's Office have developed a joint action plan to tackle the harm to consumers caused by nuisance calls and communications. This can be found at:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/information-for-industry/policy/tackling-nuisance-calls-messages>

We continue to work with regulators and the telecoms industry in a joined up effort to tackle the issue of nuisance marketing communications.

**■ Social Media: Hate Crime****Sam Tarry:****[11700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to hold (a) Instagram and (b) other social media platforms to account for (a) racist and (b) other hateful content.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Online abuse of any kind is unacceptable. Racist abuse and other hateful content has no place in an open and tolerant society.

We are taking groundbreaking steps to hold companies accountable. Under new online safety laws, all companies in scope of the framework will need to take swift and effective action against criminal online abuse - including abuse which takes place anonymously. Major platforms will also need to address legal but harmful content for adults. Priority categories of legal but harmful content for adults will be set out in secondary legislation and these are likely to include some forms of online abuse.

Users will also be better able to report abuse, and should expect to receive an appropriate response from the platform. This might include the removal of harmful content, sanctions against offending users, or changing processes and policies to better protect users. If a company fails in these duties, it could face an investigation and enforcement action from the regulator, Ofcom, including large fines.

The draft Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework, has now been published for pre-legislative scrutiny. It is for Parliament to determine how and when the Bill will be scrutinised, which the government hopes will be soon.

## ■ Sports: Coronavirus

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[10200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the financial effect to professional sports of extending covid-19 restrictions beyond 21 June 2021.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government continues to monitor the data as part of the assessment for easing of restrictions through Step 4 which will take place no earlier than the 21st June. Through Step 3 of the roadmap we have started to see the very welcome return of fans into stadia.

The Government has provided continued financial support to spectator sports through the £300 million Sport Survival Package announced in November 2020 and a further announcement of £300 million in March 2021 for a summer phase of the Package. To date, we have publicly announced more than c.£215 million of support through the package. This has ensured the survival of major spectator sports whilst restrictions on crowd capacities have been in place.

The Government remains committed to engaging and supporting the sector to maintain a complete picture of the financial impact of Covid-19 to ensure sports survive this difficult period wherever possible.

## ■ Technology

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[10722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will allocate resources to the undertaking of practical proofs of value and pilots in assured data technology on a joint collaborative and open Government and industry basis.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Mission 1 of the National Data Strategy commits to unlocking the value of data held across the economy. We will publish a policy framework to set out government's role in enabling improved data availability, and we will pilot the most promising interventions. In May, we announced a new National Data Strategy Forum to ensure diverse perspectives beyond government and the public sector inform the implementation of the National Data Strategy.

Collaboration with the private sector is already an important part of our work. The Geospatial Commission ran a pilot project over the past two years to consider the value and feasibility of creating a National Underground Asset data sharing platform to help locate buried assets for safer and more efficient work. The pilot involved more than 40 different public and private asset owners - from local authorities to national infrastructure providers, independent network operators and major utilities. In the next year, work will commence on a production platform starting by building a regional product for three regions, the North East of England, Wales and London.

## ■ Tourism: Coronavirus

**Peter Aldous:** [\[7815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his timescale is for publication of the Tourism Recovery Plan; and if he will include measures to develop rather than maintain the domestic tourism industry in that Plan.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government intends to publish the Tourism Recovery Plan shortly. Alongside addressing short and medium term challenges, the plan will set out a long-term framework for how the Government will work with the sector to build back better from the pandemic - and ultimately develop a more sustainable, innovative, and data-driven tourism industry.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Education: Coronavirus

**Kate Green:** [\[11551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department spent on consultancy services to support the work of former Education Recovery Commissioner Sir Kevan Collins.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has not spent any money on consultancy services to support the work of Sir Kevan Collins in his role as Education Recovery Commissioner.

### ■ Extracurricular Activities: Sports

**Stuart Anderson:** [\[8736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that school-aged children have access to affordable extra-curricular sports activities.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is up to schools to decide what sport and extra-curricular activities to offer to their pupils. The Government is committed to ensuring all children have access to high quality clubs, competitions and activities outside school, which are easy to find and participate in, and support their recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. That is why £10.1 million of extra funding was recently announced to support schools to open their sports facilities outside of school hours, allowing them to work with local sports clubs to provide children with an increased selection of high quality extra-curricular activities. On top of wider economic support, the Government has announced a £100 million support fund for local authority leisure centres to ensure facilities remain available once public health restrictions are lifted. Sport England has provided £270 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ministers recently hosted a roundtable with National Governing Bodies of Sport to discuss increasing opportunities for children to get active, including taking part in extra-curricular sport. This resulted in the launch of the new Active Recovery Hub. The hub provides schools and parents with activities from over forty sport providers to keep children of all ages active, including hundreds of ideas for extra-curricular activities. The Department is also ensuring children have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular sport during the school holidays. The Holiday Activities and Food Programme will provide children with the opportunity to take part in a range of engaging activities, including sport. We will also be providing funding to secondary schools to deliver a short summer schools programme blending academic education and enrichment opportunities, such as sport.

### ■ National Tutoring Programme: Contracts

**Kate Green:** [\[11547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the value is of each bid received for the National Tutoring Programme contract for academic year 2021-22; and how many pupils are projected to receive tutoring under each of those bids.

**Kate Green:** [\[11548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the projected profit margin is for the National Tutoring Programme contract awarded to Randstad.

**Kate Green:** [\[11549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the minimum hourly rate for tutors is under the National Tutoring Programme contract awarded to Randstad.

**Kate Green:** [\[11550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assurances his Department has received on the qualifications of the tutors delivering tuition under the National Tutoring Programme contract awarded to Randstad.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has announced that Randstad will be the new supplier of the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) from September 2021. They will be supported by Teach First to ensure the programme is successfully set up for effective delivery and continuous improvement in the 2021/22 academic year.

The new £25 million contract with Randstad runs for one year, with the option to extend for two further years. The original values were based on information from year 1, and this bid represents good value for money. The programme aims to reach some 750,000 disadvantaged pupils during the 2021/22 academic year.

The Department followed the open procedure as detailed in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, to ensure a fair and open procurement to select the supplier for the 2021/22 academic year. Tenders were submitted which were then evaluated and independently moderated.

The Department is unable to provide information on the value of each bid and projected profit margins as it is commercially sensitive. We are currently working with Randstad to prepare for next year's offer and will be able to provide further detail in due course.

The NTP will broadly remain the same into the next academic year. It will continue to operate with both the Tuition Partner and academic mentor pillars with quality approved tuition at its core. The Department has set out the Tutoring Partner Quality Standards and Accreditation Standards which Tutoring Partners will need to meet to be on the panel that schools will draw down from next year.

In addition to the core NTP offer, the Department has announced £579 million of funding will be given to schools to develop local tutoring provision using new or existing school staff. Tutors will be directly employed by schools, and schools will be funded in accordance with their pupil premium allocations.

#### ■ National Tutoring Programme: York

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[8675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department has allocated to the City of York for the National Tutoring Programme; and how much of that funding has been spent to date.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[8677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will use funding for the National Tutoring Programme to fund youth work and associated activities during the summer holidays in 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

In summer 2020, the Department announced a £1 billion COVID-19 catch up package to help to tackle the impact of lost teaching time as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, including a £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) for disadvantaged pupils. In November 2020, it was confirmed this would fund the programme for the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22. The programme has two pillars:

- Approved Tuition Partners will offer high quality, subsidised tuition to schools.
- Schools in the most disadvantaged areas will be supported to employ in house academic mentors to provide tuition to their pupils.

The Department awarded the Education Endowment Foundation funding to deliver the Tuition Partners pillar of the programme this academic year, which requires them to make high quality, subsidised tutoring available to schools across all regions through Tuition Partners. 33 Tuition Partners were approved to deliver tuition, and there is a good blend of national and regional providers that can offer support to schools across all regions in England. Further information regarding these approved Tuition Partners, including a guide to the cost of tuition charged by each partner, the subjects taught and the regions covered can be found [here](#):

<http://www.nationaltutoring.org.uk/resources/guide-to-approved-tuition-partners-2020-21>.

The Department also provided funding to Teach First to deliver the academic mentors pillar of the programme this academic year. This included the recruiting and placing of mentors in schools and providing ongoing support and monitoring.

In addition to the 5-16 programme, the NTP also made available up to £96 million to support small group tuition for 16-19 year olds, and £9 million to support the improvement of early language skills in reception classes this academic year.

Since the programme's launch in November 2020, over 227,000 pupils in over 5400 schools have accessed subsidised tuition support through the NTP. Tuition support will be available to continue through the summer holidays, where appropriate, to ensure pupils to receive their 15 hour block of tuition.

As part of the education recovery plan announced 2 June 2021 , the Department shared plans to invest additional funding to help further expand tuition support. This includes:

- £218 million of new funding to be directed to the Tuition Partner and Academic Mentor pillars of the NTP. This is in addition to the £215 million already announced to be invested in the academic year 2021/22.
- £579 million of funding will be provided to schools to develop localised school led tutoring provision using new or existing school staff. This will work alongside the NTP offer and will see tutors directly employed by schools.

As part of the wider recovery package announced in February 2021, to further help support catch up on lost education because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has committed £200 million to deliver summer schools this year. The aim of the programme is for secondary schools to deliver summer schools which offer a blend of academic teaching and enrichment activities.

In addition to summer schools, a broader programme of summer enrichment activities, including the Holiday Activities and Food programme, will be running to support children and young people and their families. We want children to enjoy the school holidays and to access fun, enriching experiences and eat healthy, nutritious meals. That is why we are investing up to £220 million in the Holiday Activities and Food programme which has been expanded to every local authority across England this year.

## ■ Pre-school Education

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[10683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will extend the 15 hours a week free early education for three and four year olds to children once they turn three years old as opposed to when they commence the term after their third birthday.

**Vicky Ford:**

As set out in the regulations underpinning the entitlements to free early education and childcare, available here:

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/2147/pdfs/ukxi\\_20142147\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/2147/pdfs/ukxi_20142147_en.pdf), children become eligible for a free early education place at different points in the year, depending on when the child turns 3. The 15 hours free childcare entitlement begins from 1 September, 1 January or 1 April following their third birthday. They then remain eligible for an early education place until either they start in reception at a state-funded school (for many children this will be the September following their fourth birthday), or the term after they turn 5 (statutory school age). This is intended to ensure that all children receive at least 2 years (or 3 years if they are eligible for an early education place at the age of 2) of early education and/or reception, before they reach statutory school age.

These termly deadlines link closely with that of the department's other early entitlements, in order to create consistency across the offers. It also allows local authorities and childcare providers to better plan and ensure sufficient early years places are available for parents each term, as there are clear periods for when children are likely to enter into a place.

There is a wide range of support available for parents with childcare costs outside of the free early education entitlements, including Tax-Free Childcare. For every £8 parents pay their provider via an online account, the government will pay £2, up to a maximum contribution of £2,000 per child each year (up to £500 every 3 months), for children under 12. Parents can apply for this and, if found eligible, can start saving immediately following their application.

**■ Pupils: Mental Health****Peter Kyle:****[11600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of pupils' mental health and wellbeing during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are working with the Department of Health and Social Care to monitor the emerging evidence on the experiences of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure the support measures being put in place by the government, including in the longer term, are informed by the most up-to-date evidence.

In particular, Public Health England is monitoring the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, including on children and young people, and is publishing regular surveillance reports. Their report about population mental health and wellbeing in England during the COVID-19 outbreak was last updated on 8 April:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report>.



On 10 October 2020, the Department for Education published its second annual 'State of the Nation' report, which focused on children and young people's experience associated with wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. The report has helped the government, children and young people's services, schools, parents and anyone interested in children and young people's wellbeing to understand children and young people's experiences of the COVID-19 outbreak, the measures put in place to reduce the impact of the outbreak, and the broader effects on society.

The department has also been collecting regular survey data on children and young people's wellbeing and experiences during the COVID-19 outbreak. We expect to publish this data in the autumn.

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is a priority for this government. We have supported schools and colleges to put the right pastoral support in place through the Wellbeing for Education Return scheme in the 2020/21 academic year, which funded expert advisers 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 5 March 2021, we announced an additional £79 million to accelerate the significant planned expansion of children and young people's mental health services, which will allow around 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services; this includes 2,000 more children and young people getting access to eating disorder services and accelerating the coverage of mental health support teams over the financial year 2021/22. This will enable community mental health services to provide more children and young people more timely care.

#### ■ **Pupils: West Yorkshire**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[8766]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 537, how the figures provided in that Answer compare to the average per pupil funding for (a) primary and (b) secondary schools throughout West Yorkshire.

**Nick Gibb:**

The schools block funding allocated to schools for the 2021-22 financial year in each West Yorkshire local authority is as follows:

LOCAL AUTHORITY	PRIMARY FUNDING PER PUPIL	SECONDARY FUNDING PER PUPIL
Bradford	£4,596.16	£6,042.03
Calderdale	£4,593.96	£5,799.59
Kirklees	£4,573.93	£5,856.52
Leeds	£4,548.03	£5,961.28
Wakefield	£4,502.36	£5,755.73

The schools block funding allocated to the Yorkshire and Humber region is £4,567.07 per primary pupil and £5,858.44 per secondary pupil.

Further information on school funding statistics can be found at the following link, for which the latest available figures are for the 2020-21 financial year: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics/2020-21#dataDownloads-1>.

## ■ Schools: Protective Clothing

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[7141]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the SAGE Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, Operational sub-group SPI-M-O: Consensus Statement on COVID-19, 21 April 2021, and the statement in para.19 highlighting the importance of maintaining mask wearing in schools in the coming months, for what reason he changed the Government guidance on 10 May to state that face coverings would be no longer required in schools and colleges from 17 May; if he will make it his policy to revise that guidance in line with the advice from the SAGE SPIMO subgroup; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

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

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

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

Our policy on face coverings and the system of controls is kept under review and is informed by the latest scientific and medical advice from PHE. Further information on the use and effectiveness of face coverings can be found at: <https://phe.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-retrieve-file.pl?id=9adedb17d5622f9cd7e42febcbdb19ad> and [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963639/DfE\\_Evidence\\_summary\\_COVID-19\\_-\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_education\\_settings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf).

## ■ Teachers: Recruitment

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** **[11716]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase teacher recruitment.

**Nick Gibb:**

The number of teachers remains high, with more than 453,000 working in schools across the country – over 12,000 more than in 2010.

The Department recognises, however, that more needs to be done to ensure that this level of recruitment is maintained. One of the Department's top priorities is to ensure that we continue to attract and retain high-quality teachers, for example through transforming the support and professional development teachers receive, as well as helping create the right climate for head teachers to establish supportive school cultures.

The teacher pay increases in recent years are making a substantial difference to the competitiveness of the early career pay offer (for example, this academic year, teacher starting salaries have increased by 5.5%).

In terms of attracting new trainees into teaching, there has been an increase in the number of new trainees this year – in the academic year 2020/21, 41,472 new trainees were recruited overall – over 7,000 (23%) more than in 2019 – which shows that teaching continues to be an attractive career option.

Additionally, in the academic year 2020/21, 14,994 postgraduate trainees were recruited to EBacc subjects – 1,987 more trainee teachers than the previous year.

The quality of this year's trainee teachers remains high, with 23% of postgraduate entrants holding a first-class degree in the academic year 2020/21, which is 3 percentage points higher than the previous year.

The Department is committed to ensuring that these recruits receive the best training possible. From this September, new trainee teachers will be entitled to at least three years of evidence-based professional development and support, starting with the new Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework, followed by a two-year induction based on the Early Career Framework (ECF).

The ECF is the biggest teaching reform in a generation and will give early-career teachers access to high-quality training and mentoring. In addition to this, the Department is 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.

The Department recognises that there is further to go in some subjects. That is why a range of measures have been put in place, including bursaries worth up to £24,000 and scholarships worth up to £26,000, to encourage talented trainees to key subjects such as chemistry, computing, mathematics, and physics. There are also training bursaries available as part of the Subject Knowledge Enhancement programme, which helps trainees in seven EBacc subjects to gain the depth of subject knowledge needed to train to teach their chosen subject.

The Department is taking action to ensure recent success in increasing ITT recruitment is maintained. For example, the Department is launching a new one-stop ITT application system. The 'Apply' service will be fully rolled out by October 2021.

Additionally, the Department is taking steps to make it easier for schools to recruit teachers. 'Teaching Vacancies' is a free, national job listing service that is saving schools money and attracting high-quality candidates: [https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/?\\_ga=2.204282384.1894025638.1594023142-892610644.1591690663](https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/?_ga=2.204282384.1894025638.1594023142-892610644.1591690663). This service can help schools to quickly list vacancies for both permanent and fixed-term teaching staff.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Air Pollution: Dunstable

**Andrew Selous:**

**[11500]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his department will provide information his Department on the 2020 bias adjustment factor for the Dunstable air quality management area to enable Central Bedfordshire Council to produce the 2020 air quality figures for that area.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In January, Defra invited local authorities to complete a short survey on the impact of Covid-19 on their local air quality management (LAQM) activities to inform the publication of supplementary Covid-19 guidance on LAQM duties for English local authorities for the upcoming reporting year.

The response from local authorities indicated that on the whole, submissions of local bias studies into the national survey were unaffected. This informed the decision to continue the release of the national bias adjustment factors within the usual cycle. As a result, the first round of National Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors for 2020 diffusion tube monitoring data were released in April 2021 and local authorities were notified. The national bias adjustment factors are available at <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/bias-adjustment-factors/national-bias.html>.

Central Bedfordshire Council should therefore have the bias adjustment information they require in order to process 2020 air quality data for the Dunstable air quality management area. Should the council require further advice they should contact the LAQM Helpdesk.

Defra provides technical support to local authorities via a dedicated LAQM Helpdesk (phone, email and webpage) to support local authorities in their monitoring and modelling efforts to ensure a consistent approach.

## ■ Recycling

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[11604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward proposals to introduce a deposit return scheme in England.

**Emma Hardy:** [\[12280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent progress his Department has made on implementing a deposit return scheme.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government remains committed to introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers. We recently undertook a second consultation on introducing the deposit return scheme, in which we set out timelines for the scheme to go live.

We want to have an ambitious but realistic timetable to ensure that we are implementing a deposit return scheme that will be as effective as possible in achieving our objectives. We have therefore reviewed the timelines required to implement a deposit return scheme and currently anticipate that the scheme would launch in 2024, subject to the outcome of the second consultation and parliamentary passage of the Environment Bill.

We are now analysing responses to the consultation and will set out next steps in due course.

## ■ Weedkillers: Crops

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[11557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of Aminopyralid residues on (a) crop production (b) people who rely on home-grown crops for food security over the last 12 months.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The herbicide aminopyralid is authorised for the control of annual and perennial broadleaf weeds in certain crops, turf and pasture. Aminopyralid products are subject to strict conditions of use aimed at preventing aminopyralid residues from leaving farms where it has been used.

The Health and Safety Executive maintains close contact with the main authorisation holder for this herbicide, Corteva Agriscience, and has regular reviews of this issue.

The number of reported incidents has declined significantly since the measures were introduced in 2009 and is now at a very low level. Corteva has a product stewardship programme in place that is designed to ensure users are fully aware of the particular requirements for correct use.

In our 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government has outlined its approach to reducing the environmental impact of pesticides while protecting crops. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) lies at the heart of our approach to maximise the use of non-chemical control techniques and minimise the use of chemical pesticides. IPM means that pesticide users can reduce the associated risks (including indirect effects), combat pest resistance, and support agricultural productivity. This includes increasing the use of nature-based, low toxicity solutions and precision technologies, with potential to enhance biodiversity.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[7820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions has he had with his international counterparts on the de-cluttering of satellites in space.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government actively participates in a number of multi-lateral fora, including the UN Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Subcommittees and the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC), alongside a number of bodies defining safety standards. The UK Government works collaboratively with its international partners to define the best practice and associated guidelines that will ensure space is accessible for future generations.

The UK also plays a leading role in supporting the development of technology for the sustainable and responsible use of space. The UK is the largest contributor to the European Space Agency (ESA) Space Safety programme aimed at preventing collisions in space, improving detection and tracking of objects in space and fielding demonstration missions of active capture and safe de-orbiting of spent satellites. The UK Government has also licensed a number of UK-operated technology demonstration missions for active debris removal in orbit.

### ■ Africa: Terrorism

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[11565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the local, regional and international security threats posed by extremist terrorist groups in (a) Burkina Faso, (b) Mali, (c) Nigeria and (d) Mozambique; and what assistance the UK is providing to tackle those groups.

**James Duddridge:**

We are concerned about the security situations in the Sahel (including Burkina Faso and Mali), North East Nigeria and the wider Lake Chad Basin, and in the province of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. Insecurity continues to have a tragic impact on people living in these regions. We regularly discuss issues of insecurity with our counterparts in each region. In January, I met Burkinabe President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré to discuss the security challenges in the Sahel and their impact on the people of Burkina Faso. In March and April I visited Cameroon and Nigeria respectively, where I discussed issues of insecurity with the Foreign Ministers of both countries. Lord Ahmad reaffirmed UK support to help Mozambique fight terrorism when he spoke to the Mozambican Foreign Minister in March, and I also raised Cabo Delgado when I spoke to the Foreign Minister in February.

The UK Government is providing security assistance to regions affected by insecurity. This includes through our recent deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA), our support to the Multinational Joint Task Force, a regional force coordinating military efforts and security in the Lake Chad Basin, and in Mozambique under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding. We also support those worst affected by conflict through our humanitarian assistance. For example, in North East Nigeria, our lifesaving support will reach more than 1.5 million people over five years (2017-2022).

**■ Bah Ndaw and Moctar Ouane****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[8771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Malian counterpart on the Malian military capturing Bah Ndaw and Moctar Ouane.

**James Duddridge:**

I have condemned the coup in Mali and called for the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all those detained, including the former President and Prime Minister who remain under house arrest. The UK has made clear that any attempt to impose a change of leadership by force, including through forced resignations, is unacceptable. The British Ambassador to Mali met the former Prime Minister Moctar Ouane after he was released from detention. The UK has not engaged with the leadership in place since the coup. I made clear that the UK stands ready to support ECOWAS efforts to monitor progress towards democratic, constitutional rule within the agreed timeframe, and with full respect for the conditions set out by ECOWAS. The UK's Sahel Envoy has already been speaking to like-minded counterparts to understand how best to coordinate international support. I have also reiterated the importance of renewed commitment to the broader priorities set out by the former transitional government, including efforts to tackle impunity and drive forward progress on the Malian peace process.

## ■ Bangladesh: Rohingya

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[7831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the statement of the UK's Ambassador to the UN Geneva, Launch of Rohingya Joint Response Plan in Bangladesh on 18 May 2021, whether support to the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and Bangladesh host communities will be reduced.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK remains a leading donor to the Rohingya response in Bangladesh despite the financial pressures. At the launch of the Joint Response Plan on 18 May, we announced £27.6 million in new funding to the Rohingya response in Bangladesh, bringing our total contribution over £320 million since the crisis started in 2017. Our financial contribution will continue to deliver lifesaving aid to both Rohingya refugees and host communities. This includes food assistance, health services, water and sanitation, camp management, shelter, cooking gas, and protection for survivors of gender-based violence. We have prioritised this assistance and the consolidation of the provision of services to achieve better effectiveness, impact, and value for taxpayers' money. In addition to bilateral funding, the UK is providing support to the Rohingya refugee response through global funds such as the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, Central Emergency Response Fund and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. UK funds also support the Rohingya through the UN agencies and the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

## ■ Corruption

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[8629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of recent comments by the President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid, urging the UK Government to take action on the flow of money to autocratic regimes via the UK.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government has long recognised the corrosive risks of dirty money, including from Russia, being laundered in the UK. In December 2020, the Government published the UK's third National Risk Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing, which presents a comprehensive understanding of the risk of money laundering, and the financing of terrorism through the UK. This assessment informs the UK's response to these threats, including through our foreign and development policy.

Tackling illicit finance is central to the FCDO's mission to support Open Societies, and to act as a force for good in the world. The Foreign Secretary recently launched the UK's first sanctions under our new global anti-corruption sanctions regime, which imposes asset freezes and travel bans that stop those involved in serious corruption from entering, and channelling money through the UK. We were already the first country in the G20 to establish a public register of the beneficial owners of firms so



that secretive shell companies could not be used to hide the real owners of assets and companies. In 2018, the Financial Action Task Force found that the UK had one of the strongest systems for combatting money laundering, and terrorist financing globally. On top of this, our new Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime will immediately act as a further deterrent, ensuring that Britain is not a safe haven for illicit funds.

## ■ **Democratic Republic of Congo: Overseas Aid**

**Layla Moran:**

[\[11646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7262 on Democratic Republic of Congo: Overseas Aid, what estimate he has made of the value of Official Development Assistance funding allocated to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2021-22.

**James Duddridge:**

Given we are in a one-year spending settlement, FCDO's 2021/22 planned country allocations (budgets) will be published in our Annual Report later this year alongside our audited 2020/21 accounts. The UK government's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data, will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022. We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (which is updated monthly).

## ■ **Emergency Travel Documents**

**Damien Moore:**

[\[10620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that applications for Emergency Travel Documents are processed in line with her Department's service standards.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is responsible for issuing Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) to British people overseas who do not have their full passport available and who need to travel urgently. The published target is that, in straightforward cases, ETDs will normally be ready in two working days once a full and complete application is received.

In a normal year the FCDO issues over 30,000 ETDs. To ensure we can provide a more consistent service, in line with the published target, the FCDO has recently completed a global programme to centralise ETD processing into a specialised global ETD service centre in three locations. From May 2021 all British people have been able to apply online 24/7, and have their application processed by dedicated ETD staff, with the option to collect their ETD in person from a British Embassy or Consulate or, for those eligible, have it couriered to them. The ETD service centre frees up other consular staff at posts overseas to focus on delivering high quality, professional consular assistance to those who most need our help.

The FCDO is continuously improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the service it offers to British people requiring an ETD. It uses customer satisfaction surveys and feedback to develop the application process as well as collection and courier options. The latest satisfaction survey (Q3/Q4 2020-21) records that 89% of applicants are satisfied with the ETD service they receive.

## ■ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid

**Helen Hayes:** [\[8684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the potential effect of reductions to British Overseas Development Assistance on the number of people living in Ethiopia who will receive humanitarian assistance in 2021 and 2022.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[8685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Written Statement of 21 April 2021 on FCDO update, what the reduction in the humanitarian budget for Ethiopia is.

**James Duddridge:**

The Government has had to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce the UK's commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) on overseas development assistance (ODA). The FCDO Ethiopia Country Plan and Official Development Assistance allocations are still under review. We are committed to ensuring that UK aid is spent helping the poorest and most vulnerable people in Ethiopia. In 2020/21, the UK spent over £116 million bilaterally in response to the humanitarian impacts of the conflict in Tigray, Covid-19, locusts and climate change in Ethiopia. We continue to be committed to ensuring that UK aid is spent as effectively as possible to help the poorest and most vulnerable people in Ethiopia.

## ■ Females: Education

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[10555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the G7 summit being held in Cornwall between 11 and 13 June 2021, whether he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a call to action on girls' education that includes tackling (a) violence against children and (b) all other barriers to education.

**Wendy Morton:**

2021 is a year of UK leadership on the world stage, including on girls' education. Meeting under the UK Presidency, G7 Foreign and Development Ministers endorsed two new, global, SDG 4 milestone targets on girls' education, which we are calling on the world to help deliver. G7 Foreign and Development Ministers also endorsed a girls' education declaration, which specifically states that the G7 will work in collaboration with developing country partners, multilateral institutions, civil society, girl-led groups, and youth leaders, to remove the obstacles to education that stand in

the way of girls. This includes committing to address the social, environmental, and institutional barriers to education for adolescent girls, such as reducing violence, including sexual and gender-based violence in and out of schools, increasing access to comprehensive sexuality education, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and amending restrictive policies or legislation that prevent girls from thriving in school.

The Prime Minister is calling on G7 Leaders to re-endorse both the targets and declaration in the Leaders' Communique, and we have already met with a number of stakeholders to discuss how we can galvanise action towards our two global objectives.

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[10556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the upcoming G7 summit being held in Cornwall between 11 and 13 June 2021, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that its commitment to increasing the number of girls who have access to 12 years of education will be maintained following reductions in aid spending from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GNI.

**Wendy Morton:**

2021 is a year of UK leadership on the world stage, including on girls' education. In May, G7 Foreign and Development Ministers endorsed two new, global, SDG 4 milestone targets of getting 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 in the next 5 years. The Prime Minister will also be using the G7 Leaders' Summit to call on G7 Leaders to re-endorse our girls' education targets and declaration in the Leaders' Communique, and make pledges to support the Global Partnership for Education as we look ahead to the Global Education Summit next month.

As announced by the Foreign Secretary on 21 April, the FCDO will also spend £400 million bilaterally on girls' education this year. This very substantial investment of UK ODA is only one of our tools in achieving our ambitions.

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[10557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) increase awareness of (i) child marriage, (ii) sexual exploitation, (iii) child labour and (iv) other forms of violence and exploitation being significant barriers to girls' education and (b) remove those barriers to education.

**Wendy Morton:**

Tackling the complex barriers to girls' accessing and staying in education, including child marriage, sexual exploitation, child labour, and gender-based violence, will be key to achieving our global education targets. The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) is committed to raising awareness of these issues, and we have ensured that gender equality, including girls' education, is at the centre of the UK's G7 Presidency.

FCDO's £38 million investment since 2015 to tackle child marriage has contributed to a 15% reduction in the global prevalence of child marriage over the last decade. As a leading supporter of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the UK is driving the international movement to the end violence, abuse, and exploitation of children. The UK is proud to be a global leader in efforts to end violence against women and girls. Through our What Works to Prevent Violence Programme, we have pioneered approaches worldwide that have shown reductions of around 50% in violence.

### ■ **France: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[10206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with their French counterparts on the decision to impose mandatory quarantine on UK arrivals.

**Wendy Morton:**

The decision to introduce self-isolation measures for arrivals from the UK is a matter for the French Government. We work closely with French partners through the British Embassy in Paris and with the French Embassy in London to ensure that all travel restrictions are communicated to UK nationals. From Wednesday 9 June, new measures apply to travellers from the UK to France. Travellers who are fully vaccinated will not need to justify an essential reason for travel or self-isolate upon arrival in France. Further information is available on our Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Travel Advice pages, which we update regularly.

### ■ **Lithuania: Airspace**

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[8630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Lithuanian counterpart on what steps (a) the UK Government and (b) NATO can take to assist in securing Lithuanian airspace in the aftermath of the recent hijacking of Flight FR4978 and kidnapping of Belarusian journalist Raman Pratasevich.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government has been in close contact with partners in responding to the forced diversion of FR4978 and the arrest of Roman Protasevich by the Belarusian authorities. The UK has worked in the G7, NATO, and the United Nations Security Council and as Co-Chair of the Media Freedom Coalition to condemn the Belarusian regime's appalling and dangerous actions. The Government welcomes the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Council's decision to launch a fact finding mission into the incident.

NATO issued a statement on 26 May strongly condemning the incident and the Foreign Secretary raised it at the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers on 1 June,

highlighting the assault on civil aviation law and calling on Allies and Partners to stand together and send a clear message of unity against such actions.

The UK and Lithuania collaborate extremely closely, both bilaterally and through multilateral bodies such as NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), to address threats to regional security. The Foreign Secretary will be speaking with Foreign Minister Landsbergis to assure him of the UK's steadfast support for Lithuania's actions in response to this unprecedented act, and that the UK stands ready to work with Lithuania to hold the Belarusian authorities to account.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[11507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter of 7 May 2021 from the Rt. hon. Member for Chipping Barnet on whether the UK Government will boycott the Durban IV UN conference on racism.

**Nigel Adams:**

The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, including antisemitism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. Some of the antisemitic actions and speeches in and around the 2001 Durban conference and its various follow-up events gave rise to serious concerns. We will consider UK attendance in the light of developments between now and the commemoration event, including the likelihood of any recurrence of antisemitism. A reply will be sent shortly to the letter of 7 May from the Rt.Hon. Member for Chipping Barnet.

## ■ **Middle East and North Africa: Peace**

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

[\[8737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its effect on the UK's goal of delivering peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

[\[8738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of alleged comments by Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps having significant influence over Iran's diplomatic activities.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK Government has long been clear about its concerns over the continued destabilising activity of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This includes IRGC political, financial and military support to a number of militant and proscribed

groups including Hizballah in Lebanon and Syria, militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. The IRGC is sanctioned in its entirety by the UK.

We regularly raise Iran's destabilising role in the region at UN Security Council. We continue to support the security of our allies, including through our close defence partnerships across the Middle East and by working to strengthen institutions and build capacity in more vulnerable countries, including in Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon.

## ■ Middle East: Peace and Security

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[8567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had on the potential effect of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on regional peace and security with his counterparts in (a) Israel, (b) United Arab Emirates and (c) Bahrain.

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[8568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had on Iran's nuclear activities with his counterparts in (a) Israel, (b) United Arab Emirates and (c) Bahrain.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign Secretary has been clear that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. Our immediate priority is working with Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) participants to return the US to the deal, bring Iran back into compliance with its commitments and restore the benefits of the deal for all. The Government has also long been clear about its concerns over Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) continued destabilising activity.

We regularly discuss regional issues with the Governments of Israel, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain including their policy towards Iran, and continue to support the security of our allies. The Foreign Secretary was in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories over 25-26 May for talks with Ministers following the Israel-Gaza ceasefire, including on regional security. I [Mr Cleverly] discussed regional security with HE Khalifa Shaheen al Marar, Minister of State with responsibility for Arab Affairs at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 March.

## ■ Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish

**Wayne David:** [\[11484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether on his recent visit to Saudi Arabia he raised the case of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish who is facing the death penalty for protest-related crimes he is alleged to have committed as a child in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

The United Kingdom strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. The Saudi authorities are well aware of the

UK's opposition to the use of the death penalty. We reiterated our opposition to the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September 2020.

We regularly raise our concerns about the use of the death penalty, including individual cases with the Saudi authorities and we will continue to do so. The Foreign Secretary raised human rights issues, notably around justice reform and freedom of media expression during his visit of 7 June 2021. I raised the use of the death penalty with the Saudi Human Rights Commission during my visit to Saudi Arabia on 24 May.

## ■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

**Patrick Grady:** [\[10464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the value of in-kind donations by the UK of (a) covid-19 vaccines, (b) ventilators, (c) oxygen-generating equipment and (d) PPE stocks to (i) India, (ii) countries in Africa and (iii) other Least-Developed or Middle-Income countries will be counted as Official Development Assistance.

**Wendy Morton:**

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the official international standard used to measure aid flows, and is produced according to agreed definitions and methodologies. Final 2021 UK ODA spend will be published as usual in the FCDO's Statistics on International Development report in 2022.

## ■ Passenger Ships

**Jackie Doyle-Price:** [\[7801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with the cruise industry as required by paragraph 38 of the 2nd Global Travel Taskforce report; and when he plans to update his Department's guidance on ocean cruises in response to that MoU.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO and Department for Transport have proposed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with cruise operators to ensure there is a clear understanding of the responsibilities of both operators and government should repatriation of cruise passengers be required. Discussions between the cruise industry and government are nearing completion. An agreed MoU is one aspect of the conditions required for the safe restart of international cruising. Travel advice for cruises will continue to be informed by the latest public health risk assessments.

## ■ Passenger Ships: Coronavirus

**Jackie Doyle-Price:** [\[7800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on implementing Recommendation seven of the Global Travel Taskforce report, published on 5 April 2021, to ensure international cruises restart

alongside the wider restart of international travel in line with the country traffic light system.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO remains fully committed to working closely with the Department for Transport and industry following the publication of the second Global Travel Taskforce report. International cruises are expected to restart alongside the wider restart of international travel, in line with the "traffic light" system. This will be subject to continued satisfactory evidence from the domestic restart and cruising in other countries. Travel advice for cruises will continue to be informed by the latest public health risk assessments.

■ **Press Freedom: Europe**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[10205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the detention of Roman Protasevich on journalistic freedoms in Europe.

**Wendy Morton:**

As the Foreign Secretary made clear in his 24 May statement to Parliament, the Belarusian authorities' forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 and their subsequent arrest of the journalist, Roman Protasevich, is a shocking attack on human rights, media freedom, civil aviation and international law. The Government has condemned the harrowing broadcast of Mr Protasevich's interview by Belarusian state television. It is distressing to watch and clearly has been made under duress. Those responsible must be held to account. The Government is deeply concerned by the continuing attacks on media freedom in Belarus and has repeatedly called on the Belarusian authorities to release journalists who have been arbitrarily detained and hold to account those responsible for attacks on journalists and for other human rights violations.

■ **Somaliland: Elections**

**Stephen Doughty:**

[R] [\[11564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of recent Parliamentary and Local Government elections in Somaliland; and what support the Government provided for those elections.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK commends the people and Government of Somaliland on the successful conduct of parliamentary and local council elections on 31 May. The transparent and peaceful nature of the balloting process is a testament to Somaliland's commitment to democratisation, security and stability. The election of minority clan and youth candidates is a welcome development. However the decreased number of women in elected office is a matter of concern and we call on the Somaliland Government,



political parties and civil society organisations to take urgent steps to address the future representation of women in elected and non-elected public office. The UK has played a lead role as the largest donor to the election process, contributing £1.97 million to support core election costs and also funding a Limited International Election Observer Mission.

## ■ South America: Coronavirus

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[10340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support South American countries to tackle their high rates of covid-19 infections.

**Wendy Morton:**

As one of the largest donors to the international response to COVID-19, the UK has so far pledged up to £1.3 billion of UK aid to address the impacts of the pandemic, and to help end the pandemic as quickly as possible. With our strong support, COVAX has started to make progress on delivering vaccines across the world, and has delivered 77 million doses to 127 different economies to date. We believe that supporting COVAX is the best way to exit the acute phase of the pandemic.

In the Americas, the UK has co-hosted a series of regional workshops on COVAX and access to vaccines, bringing together government ministers and experts with the multilateral health system and development banks. Our embassies have regular engagement with their host countries, sharing lessons learned from the UK's experience. Much of our engagement in the coming months will be around economic recovery and building back greener and better. We work closely with partners throughout Latin America, including through high-level partnerships for sustainable growth with Mexico and Colombia.

## ■ Tigray: Internet and Telecommunications

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[11566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of telecommunications and internet access to (a) civilians, (b) media organisations and (c) humanitarian organisations in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

**James Duddridge:**

We are concerned about limitations to access to telecommunications in Tigray. Some humanitarian agencies have reported a recent improvement in the numbers of satellite phones and radios they have been allowed to import into Ethiopia. However, this is not across the board and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in particular note ongoing challenges. Internet access remains very problematic with NGOs, for example, reliant on services provided by the UN.

We continue to call for improved access to communications in Tigray as vital for an effective humanitarian response and in shining a light on the grave human rights atrocities that continue to be committed there.

### ■ **Tigray: Sexual Offences**

**Helen Hayes:**

**[8683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many victims of sexual violence in Tigray have been provided with support by the UK government to date; and if he will make a statement.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK is deeply concerned by the growing reports of gender-based violence in the Tigray region and refugee camps. Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict remains a priority for this Government and we are committed to raising this issue in a variety of multilateral fora. Under our G7 Presidency, we have raised Tigray in a joint statement (2 April) and the Foreign and Development Ministers Communique (2 May), which condemned "rape and sexual exploitation, and other forms of gender-based violence," in Tigray and called for accountability.

British Embassy staff conducted a specific protection mission in Shire in Tigray on 4-7 April, including interviewing staff and volunteers supporting survivors of sexual violence. The mission included an assessment of the current gender-based violence response, specific emergency services provided in camps and the gaps that need to be filled. As the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon outlined during the debate on the Queen's Speech, on 11 May, we are currently identifying personnel from the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Team of Experts who can deploy to the region to strengthen justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The UK is also supporting the International Committee of the Red Cross, UN agencies, specialised NGOs and 9 civil society partners to provide adequate essential services to survivors. We currently contribute to the UNICEF, International Red Crescent and national Ethiopian Red Cross response supporting a total of 545 survivors (542 females and 3 males) with case management services. 9,792 women, girls and boys at risk have already accessed gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions. Our partners also support 643 children who have experienced violence, and have been reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services and 16,488 women and girls have received material support. UK contribution is also supporting refugee survivors through UNHCR.

### ■ **Trinidad and Tobago: Coronavirus**

**Julian Sturdy:**

**[8590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is offering to Trinidad and Tobago to manage the outbreak of covid-19 in that country.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are among the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), committing £548 million which leveraged through match funding \$1 billion from other donors in 2020. This support to COVAX has been critical to it supplying COVID-19 vaccines to over 120 countries and economies. We have also committed to share the majority of our supply of any surplus vaccine doses with COVAX. Trinidad and Tobago are a self-financing participant of COVAX and have received 67,200 AstraZeneca doses to date out of an initial order of 100,800 doses.

**■ UN World Conference against Racism****Theresa Villiers:**[\[11506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to boycott the UN Durban IV Conference on racism.

**Nigel Adams:**

The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, including antisemitism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. Some of the antisemitic actions and speeches in and around the 2001 Durban conference and its various follow-up events gave rise to serious concerns. We will consider UK attendance in the light of developments between now and the commemoration event, including the likelihood of any recurrence of antisemitism.

**■ War Crimes****Alicia Kearns:**[\[8759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the new conflict centre announced in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the centre makes atrocity prevention the focus of the Government's work on conflict; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the centre makes use of expertise from outside of government.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO's new conflict centre will support a more integrated HMG approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution, including working with teams across FCDO and HMG to support the wide range of interconnected agendas aimed at building inclusive and stable environments and preventing possible atrocities. A core part of the centre's role will be to draw on expertise from across HMG and beyond to support the UK's work on conflict, including from civil society, academia, and the private sector, and through cooperation with bilateral partners and multilateral organisations.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Abortion: Drugs**

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[11531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 30 March 2021 to Question 164679 on Abortion: Drugs, with which partner organisations his Department is planning to examine the system of reporting abortion complications; how many of those partner organisations are abortion providers or providers that support abortion; and what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that that examination is objective.

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[11532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 30 March 2021 to Question 164679 on Abortion: Drugs, what limitations have been identified in respect of the collection of abortion complications data.

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[11533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 March 2021 to Question 164679 on Abortions: Drugs, what her Departments's timeframe is for examining the collection of abortion complications data with partner organisations; and what the (a) form and (b) content of that examination will be.

**Helen Whately:**

Scoping of the Department's project to review the system of recording abortion complications data is currently underway. Abortion complications data is collected via the HSA4 abortion notification form. However, it is recognised that the data is limited as not all complications will be known to the practitioner at the time the form is submitted.

To improve the accuracy of data collected, the Department will work closely with a range of statutory bodies, professional organisations and abortion providers to identify additional sources of information that could be used to compliment complications data collected via HSA4 abortion notification forms and improve the flow of data on abortion complications between different organisations, such as independent and National Health Service abortion providers and wider NHS health and care services.

We anticipate this work will be completed later this year.

**■ Abortion: Research**

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[11530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of research on abortion at home that has not been co-authored by people representing abortion providers; and what approach his Department takes in respect of research that is undertaken by people and organisations that have a financial and reputational interest in its results.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made. The Government committed to undertake a public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. The consultation has now closed and we will be considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year. Any evidence or research submitted as part of this consultation will be reviewed and considered alongside any potential conflicts of interest.

**Alcoholic Drinks and Tobacco: Misuse****Crispin Blunt:****[R] [11460]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of (a) the likelihood of alcohol and tobacco being misused, (b) the risk of alcohol and tobacco misuse causing harmful effects sufficient to constitute a social problem and (c) the effectiveness of excluding alcohol and tobacco from control of harmful drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

**Jo Churchill:**

No recent assessment has been made.

The Government is committed to supporting the most vulnerable at risk from alcohol misuse, including through establishing alcohol care teams in hospitals and supporting children of alcohol dependent parents. We will be publishing a new Tobacco Control Plan later this year setting out plans for England to become a smoke-free country by 2030.

**Cancer: Medical Treatments****Damien Moore:****[10621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the backlog for cancer treatment is prioritised in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government confirmed an additional £3 billion for the National Health Service in the Spending Review 2020, on top of the long-term settlement, to support the recovery from the impact of COVID-19. Cancer patients will continue to be prioritised and will benefit from approximately £1 billion to begin tackling the elective backlog.

The NHS is moving rapidly to increase diagnostic capacity, with a particular focus on immediate action plans to increase endoscopy and computerised tomography capacity, and focusing on reducing the number of those waiting more than 62 days on cancer pathways, particularly for those who have had their care delayed by the pandemic. In October, NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England launched the latest 'Help us help you' campaign to urge people with potential symptoms of cancer to see their general practitioner.

## ■ Carbohydrates

**Peter Grant:** [\[10481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring inclusion of carbohydrate content on food menus to help people with diabetes to accurately calculate their insulin requirements.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* Some respondents to our consultation on mandating calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector suggested the inclusion of other macronutrients, most notably carbohydrate content, particularly in connection with helping people with diabetes to manage their blood sugar. However, we believe there is a balance to be struck between providing accessible and useful information for consumers while not disproportionately impacting businesses and their ability to shape their menus or the appearance of menu boards.

## ■ Chickenpox: Vaccination

**Matt Western:** [\[11621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation plans to complete its review into the inclusion of the varicella (chicken pox) vaccine in the childhood vaccination programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

In 2010, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation found that offering a universal varicella vaccination programme against chickenpox would not be cost effective and may increase the risk of severe disease and complications in adulthood, both from chickenpox and shingles.

The varicella/zoster subcommittee has kept this under review. In February 2019 the subcommittee commissioned modellers to re-run the economic modelling with new quality-adjusted life year data and discount rates. This work was paused during the pandemic and will recommence in due course.

## ■ Coronavirus: Dogs

**Sir Iain Duncan Smith:** [\[R\] \[10138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using trained covid detection dogs to identify covid-19 infections; and if he will urgently set out a timescale for deployment of those dogs.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* The Department has been funding a clinical trial investigating whether COVID-19 can be detected by dogs. This work has been undertaken by a coalition including the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the charity Medical Detection Dogs.

We have received the results from phase one of the trial.

NHS Test and Trace is engaging with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Medical Detection Dogs about potential next phases of the trial.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Madeira**

**Bill Esterson:**

**[10363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk to UK travellers of the covid-19 infection rate on Madeira compared to mainland Portugal.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* Decisions to place countries on the 'red', 'amber' or 'green' lists are taken by Ministers informed by evidence, including the Joint Biosecurity Centre's (JBC) risk assessments alongside other wider public health factors. As part of the risk assessments, the JBC monitors both Portugal and the Portuguese Islands, including Madeira.

We are unable to provide the advice, evidence and methodology which informs these decisions as it relates to on-going development of Government policy. However, further information on international travel risk assessments is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-informing-international-travel-risk-assessments>

## ■ **Coronavirus: Passengers**

**Yvette Cooper:**

**[67]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the data on the country of origin of inbound passengers testing positive for covid-19 up to 10 days after arrival in the UK by variant of concern in each week of the last three months.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 17 May 2021]:* Data is published fortnightly cycle on the number of positive COVID-19 cases for England arrivals, by country of origin. In order to ensure data confidentiality and to avoid individuals being identifiable, we have suppressed any counts less than three. Due to small sample sizes we are therefore unable to publish data from each country of origin, by specific variants of concern.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Helen Hayes:**

**[10529]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the merits of prioritising clinically extremely vulnerable children for a covid-19 vaccine if licensed for use in children.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has now been authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for use in children aged 12 to 15 years old in

the United Kingdom. The Government will now be guided by the advice of experts, including the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), on any potential routine deployment of COVID-19 vaccination in children.

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[10605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the appropriateness of the Vaccine Damage Payment's severe disablement eligibility criteria in the context of the very rare blood clots reported in association with the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

No specific assessment has been made.

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[7329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Professor Van-Tam's comments at a Downing Street press conference on Wednesday 19 May, whether his Department plans to roll out turbo-boosted vaccination across areas that exhibit levels of enduring covid-19 transmission.

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[7330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Professor Van-Tam's comments to a Downing Street press conference on 19 May 2021, what criteria he plans to use to prioritise areas for turbo-boosted vaccinations.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

*[Holding answer 7 June 2021]:* We have implemented measures at record pace to get on top of the B.1.617.2 variant and control the spread. We have already implemented targeted new activity to accelerate vaccine uptake amongst eligible cohorts in Bolton and Blackburn with Darwen in order to support this move. We are now extending this activity to Bedford, Hounslow, Burnley, Leicester, Kirklees and North Tyneside. The areas chosen for targeted new activity to accelerate vaccine uptake amongst eligible cohorts were chosen on the basis of them being areas with enduring transmission where higher cases have persisted, and vaccination uptake rates are lower.

In order to ensure people across the United Kingdom have the strongest possible protection from the virus at an earlier opportunity, appointments for a second dose of the vaccine has now been brought forward from 12 to 8 weeks for those in cohorts 1-9 who are yet to receive their second dose.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[7961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason his policy was that immunocompromised people should receive their second covid-19 vaccination at 12 weeks after receipt of their first covid-19 vaccination prior to 14 May 2021.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The policy for immunocompromised people is based on the advice of the independent experts of the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).



The decision to extend the dosing interval to up to twelve weeks, made on 30 December 2019, was based on advice from the JCVI and was designed to maximize the impact of the vaccination programme. Whilst the second vaccine dose is important to sustain the protection and extend its duration, in the short term the additional impact of the second dose is likely to be modest and most of the initial protection from clinical disease is after the first dose of vaccine. The four United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers agreed with the JCVI that prioritising the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list would protect the greatest number of at-risk people in the shortest possible time.

On 14 May 2021, the Government accepted new advice from the JCVI and announced that appointments for a second dose of a vaccine would be brought forward from 12 to eight weeks for the remaining people in the top nine priority groups who have yet to receive their second dose. This is to ensure the strongest possible protection from the virus at an earlier opportunity in response to the B.1.617.2 variant of concern, first identified in India. As a result, immuno-suppressed patients who are waiting to have their second dose may therefore be invited for to book an appointment within this revised timeframe.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[8572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reach a decision on covid-19 booster vaccinations; by what date guidance on that matter will be issued to NHS delivery teams for planning purposes; how much time he plans to provide for local planning ahead of a booster campaign; and if he will make a statement.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

To ensure ongoing protection from COVID-19 for the United Kingdom population, we are working closely with NHS England on preparing for a potential booster vaccination programme from the autumn. Whilst we are planning for several potential scenarios, final decisions on the timing and scope of the booster programme in terms of when to give boosters to which groups and with which vaccines will not be taken until later this year.

Any decision on a booster vaccination programme will be informed by independent advice from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The JCVI will review the emerging scientific evidence, alongside data supplied by manufacturers, to inform the Government in our decision-making process on when to give boosters to which groups and with which vaccines.

We are continuing to work closely with NHS England to support regions and local systems with planning to ensure we are prepared to begin the rollout of any booster programme.

**Sajid Javid:**

**[8581]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have received (a) one dose and (b) two doses of the covid-19 vaccination in Bromsgrove District according to the latest available data.

**Sajid Javid:****[8582]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage of adults in Bromsgrove District have received a covid-19 vaccination according to the latest available data.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

As of 27 May 2021, the number of people in Bromsgrove Lower Tier Local Authority (LTLA) who have received a first dose and those who have received first and second doses are 65,668 and 46,519 respectively.

The estimated percentage of those aged 16 years old and over who have had at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Bromsgrove LTLA is 77.1%, based on population figures of 85,144. However, it should be noted that general practice boundaries are not necessarily coterminous with LTLA boundaries and therefore people outside of the Bromsgrove LTLA area may have been vaccinated in a Bromsgrove GP practice and vice versa. 16 years old and older, rather than 18 years old and over, has been given as the lowest relevant age cohort for population estimates across English geographies available on the National Immunisation Managements Service (NIMS) is 16-29.

Further information can be found at the following link:

[www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/)

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:****[868]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has of made (a) the delays in administering the second doses of the Pfizer BioNTech and (b) the current status of supplies of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine for the UK.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

There are no delays in administering the Pfizer vaccine. We have clear plans in place with Pfizer to ensure sufficient supply of the vaccine throughout 2021 and to prevent any shortages. There has been a regular and steady supply of vaccine doses arriving into the United Kingdom since early December and we have sufficient doses to maintain our vaccination programme as it continues to accelerate, working closely with Pfizer to ensure vaccines keep arriving into the UK.

We have sufficient vaccines available to administer second doses for Moderna, Pfizer and AstraZeneca, in line with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization) guidance. The decision to offer second doses from 8 weeks for cohorts 1 – 9 factored in that there was sufficient supply to honour the plan. There are no known issues around availability to deliver the first or second dose plan for any vaccine.

## ■ Dental Services

**Conor McGinn:** [\[10473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support he has allocated to the dental sector to increase capacity for (a) routine patient appointments and (b) urgent care during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* During the pandemic over 600 urgent treatment centres have been opened to support the delivery of urgent care. National Health Service dentists have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups, followed by overdue routine care. This has been underpinned by the requirement for dental providers to deliver 60% of contracted units of dental activity and 80% of units of orthodontic activity for the first six months of 2021/22 in order to receive full payment of their NHS contract value.

Guidance has also been issued by NHS England on the use of flexible commissioning to target restricted dental capacity to those patient groups that most need support.

**Peter Aldous:** [\[7811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce dental health inequalities within and between regions of the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

National Health Service dentists throughout the country have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided a toolkit to local commissioners to help focus the available capacity on those that need it most and to reduce oral health inequalities.

We are committed to consulting on rolling out a supervised toothbrushing scheme in more pre-school and primary school settings in England. We are also taking steps through the Health and Care Bill to make it easier to expand water fluoridation schemes so that more of the population can benefit from this clinically and cost-effective intervention. The Government's sugar reduction programme will also have a positive effect on improving oral health and reducing health inequalities.

## ■ Dental Services: Carers

**Damien Moore:** [\[10617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure carers are prioritised for NHS dental care.

**Jo Churchill:**

National Health Service dentists have been asked to maximise safe throughput, focusing first on those in greatest clinical need, then care for vulnerable groups,

followed by overdue appointments. Where carers meet these criteria they will be prioritised for NHS dental care.

#### ■ **Dental Services: St Helens**

**Conor McGinn:** [\[10474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients waiting for (a) routine and (b) urgent dental care across the St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group area.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* NHS England and NHS Improvement have confirmed that within the St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group area, there are no patients on a waiting list for urgent treatment. No estimate has been made of the number of patients waiting for routine appointments as this is managed at individual practice level.

#### ■ **Dental Services: Waiting Lists**

**Emma Hardy:** [\[10602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department are taking to reduce NHS orthodontic waiting times.

**Jo Churchill:**

National Health Service orthodontists' providers have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible. This has been underpinned by an activity threshold for full payment of contractual value which has been increased to 80% of pre-pandemic orthodontic activity levels for care delivered between April to September 2021. This is in order to facilitate access for a greater number of patients, whilst also accounting for the impact of ongoing requirements for infection, prevention and control.

#### ■ **Disability: Children**

**Helen Hayes:** [\[10527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled children recover progress in physically managing their conditions during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

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.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[10528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the mental health of disabled children and their families.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, on 23 November 2020 we published a Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Plan for COVID-19, setting out the steps we have taken to strengthen the support available, including for disabled children. On 5 March 2021, we announced that £79 million of the additional £500 million for the mental health and National Health Service workforce announced at the November 2020 Spending Review will be used to significantly expand mental health services for children, including disabled children.

## ■ Doctors' List of Patients

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[10507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps GP practices can take to maintain GP registers in the event that patients leave the country and do not inform their GP.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[10508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether GP practices check their patient lists against other visa lists, council tax lists or other registers to ensure that they are current.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[10509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what effect having non-resident patients on GP practice lists has on the funding of those practices; and whether funding is clawed back in those circumstances.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* Primary care contractors have a duty to maintain their registered patient lists in a current and accurate state. The rolling programme of list maintenance as set out in the Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual is intended to update and adjust payments to general practitioner (GP) practices quarterly based the current list of registered patients.

In line with NHS England and NHS Improvement's Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual, Primary Care Support England and clinical commissioning groups are expected to engage in regular proactive list maintenance with general practices. The Manual provides practices and commissioners with further information on how they can maintain accurate and up-to-date patient registration lists. While GPs are reliant on patients to submit information promptly, where a GP becomes aware of potential patients who need to be de-registered, practices verify whether they have attended the practice and attempt to make contact before removing patients from their registry. Additionally, checks for new entrants from abroad are completed a year

after their first registration to ensure that the lists of registered patients are as accurate as possible.

### ■ **Drugs: Misuse**

**Alyn Smith:** [\[10652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timescale is for publishing the findings of the second phase of independent review into drug misuse by Professor Dame Carol Black, announced by his Department on 2 July 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

Publication is expected in summer 2021.

### ■ **Early Years Healthy Development Review**

**Sarah Olney:** [\[11620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 1148 on Early Years Healthy Development Review: Finance, whether the recommendations outlined in the Early Years Healthy Development Review are Government policy.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Early Years Healthy Development Review, published The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days on 25 March 2021. This sets out a vision for ensuring families with babies are supported in the period from conception to age two. The vision is Government policy and the Department is currently working towards implementation of the commitments made in the Review.

### ■ **Euthanasia**

**Zarah Sultana:** [\[4714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals on assisted dying to include exemptions for people with terminal illnesses.

**Jo Churchill:**

It remains the Government's view that any change to the law on assisted dying is an issue of individual conscience and a matter for Parliament to decide rather than one for Government policy.

### ■ **Food: Regulation**

**Layla Moran:** [\[11647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of novel foods that have been approved since the UK's departure from the EU; and what assessment he has made of the effect of novel foods regulations on the UK insect foods market.

**Jo Churchill:**

No novel foods have been approved for the United Kingdom market since departure from the European Union. The Food Standards Agency has had frequent discussions with the insect industry to help potential applicants understand and prepare for the authorisation process.

**Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements****Colum Eastwood:**[\[11705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he is making on providing Global Health Insurance Cards to residents in Northern Ireland without the Union Flag on them.

**Edward Argar:**

The Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) provides necessary healthcare cover to United Kingdom residents when travelling in the European Union. It is important that the card can be easily identified as a UK document and can be recognised by healthcare providers internationally. The Union Flag is the official flag of the UK and therefore the appropriate branding for such documents.

The Government recognises the particular sensitivities around flags in Northern Ireland. As such, residents in Northern Ireland will be provided with an option to choose an alternative version of the GHIC which does not feature a Union Flag background. For security reasons all versions of GHIC have the same anti-fraud hologram which does feature the Union Flag. Residents of Northern Ireland can apply for the alternative GHIC design from 30 June 2021 at the following link:

[NHS.UK/GHIC](https://www.nhs.uk/ghic)

**HIV Infection: Screening****Thangam Debonnaire:**[\[7847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing free at-home HIV testing that is available nationwide all year round.

**Thangam Debonnaire:**[\[7849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to improve rates of early diagnosis of HIV.

**Jo Churchill:**

We recognize the importance of HIV testing for improving early diagnosis and will set out our plans for its wider access in the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and the HIV Action Plan, planned to be published this year.

Access to and provision of HIV testing, including online and self-sampling services, is the responsibility of local authorities. There is no comprehensive data available on the number of local authorities that provide HIV self-sampling services. Public Health

England's framework for the national HIV self-sampling service was set up in 2015 and is used by many local authorities.

## ■ Home Births

**Zarah Sultana:** [\[11678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the recent court ruling regarding the use of "proportional force" by healthcare workers against a pregnant woman wishing to have a home birth.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have not made an assessment.

## ■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [\[4077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that more people with Inflammatory Bowel Disease can access dietetic support.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) quality standard on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) sets out that those with IBD, and their family members and carers if appropriate, should have access to multi-disciplinary teams, including dietitians. Clinicians are advised to take NICE quality standards into account when planning patient care. The quality standard is available at the following link:

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs81](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs81)

The number of allied health professionals working in a dietetics care setting in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups has increased by 5.3% between February 2020 and February 2021.

## ■ Medical Treatments

**Alex Norris:** [\[7919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives from (a) NICE and (b) NHS England on the proposed introduction of a health inequalities modifier as part of NICE's ongoing review of its methods and processes.

**Alex Norris:** [\[7920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the proposed introduction of a health inequalities modifier for patients with (a) sickle cell disease, (b) haemoglobinopathies and (c) conditions with high levels of clinical unmet need in NICE's ongoing review of its methods and processes.



**Alex Norris:**[\[7921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle health inequalities through NICE's ongoing review of its methods and processes; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body and is currently reviewing its methods and processes for health technology assessment.

NICE consulted on the case for changes to its methods in late 2020 and proposed that there may be a case for introducing a modifier that addresses health inequalities.

NICE is now considering the responses it received to the consultation and the impacts of the proposals. It is too soon to comment on what changes might be implemented, however, NICE intends to consult on the proposed changes to its methods and processes in the summer.

Departmental officials are represented on the committees that NICE has set up as part of the review and have had a number of discussions with NICE and NHS England about the review, including about the introduction of a health inequalities modifier.

**■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists****Navendu Mishra:**[\[11685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for accessing NHS mental health services in March (a) 2021 and (b) 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The data is not held in the format requested.

**■ NHS and Social Services: Staff****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[10231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2021 to Question 153166 on NHS and Social Services: Staff, what his Department's workforce priorities are for NHS and social care staff.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* The Government is committed to expanding the National Health Service workforce and we are on track to deliver 50,000 more nurses by the end of this Parliament. The health and wellbeing of NHS staff is also a priority, as reflected in the NHS People Plan. The Plan sets out practical support for wellbeing including more comprehensive occupational and mental health support for staff.

The Government is committed to the sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals for reform later in 2021. Our objectives for reform are to enable the highest standards of care and support the workforce to

achieve their full potential through developing the skills of all staff working in the sector. We are working closely with local and national partners to ensure our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives, including of those with lived experience of the care sector.

### ■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

**Bill Esterson:** [\[10362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 6270 on NHS: Protective Clothing, if he will provide details of the companies that use Malaysian factories that have been contracted to supply surgical and examination gloves to the NHS since January 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* The following companies used factories in Malaysia to supply surgical and examination gloves under contracts with the Department:

- Cargo Services Airfreight;
- Careglove Global SDN BHD;
- CCS Mclays;
- Doja;
- Gemini Surgical;
- Unispace Global; and
- Vital Innovation.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[1302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish details of contracts with Ansell Ltd for the supply of personal protective equipment to the NHS, including (a) when those contracts were awarded and (b) when those contracts will expire.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[1303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish details of contracts with Supermax Healthcare Ltd for the supply of personal protective equipment to the NHS, including (a) when those contracts were awarded and (b) when those contracts will expire.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[1304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish details of contracts with Aurelia Ltd for the supply of personal protective equipment to the NHS, including (a) when those contracts were awarded and (b) when they will expire.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 May 2021]:* Supermax Healthcare Ltd and Ansell Ltd are on an NHS Supply Chain framework contract for the supply of examination and surgical

gloves to the National Health Service. Aurelia Ltd is not on a framework contract. The Contract Award Notice for this framework contract is available at the following link:

<https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:445390-2019:TEXT:EN:HTML>

The framework contract commenced on 30 March 2020 and ends on 29 March 2022. There is an option to extend for an additional 24 months.

## ■ **Omalizumab**

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[7761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the NHS on whether Omalizumab will be made available for the treatment of nasal polyp disease.

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[7762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will have discussions with NICE on recommending that Omalizumab is made available by the NHS for treating nasal polyp disease.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 7 June 2021]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing authoritative, evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service in England on whether medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended in a NICE appraisal

NICE's appraisal of omalizumab for treating chronic rhinosinusitis with nasal polyps was terminated because the drug manufacturer did not provide an evidence submission. The manufacturer has confirmed that it has not made an evidence submission for the appraisal because the technology will not be launched in the United Kingdom for treating this indication. NICE will review this decision if the manufacturer comes forward with an evidence submission. In the absence of guidance from NICE, NHS commissioners should make decisions on the availability of treatments based on an assessment of the available evidence.

## ■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Pancreatic Cancer UK's finding that half of people with pancreatic cancer in England are prescribed pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT), what assessment he has made of (a) the reason that half of people with pancreatic cancer are not prescribed that treatment and (b) the adequacy of prescription rates compared with NICE guidelines on PERT.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness amongst healthcare professionals of the benefits of pancreatic enzyme

replacement therapy as a treatment for people with (a) operable and (b) inoperable pancreatic cancer.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of pancreatic cancer patients in England were prescribed pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the prescription rates of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy for inoperable pancreatic cancer patients in England who are not treated in specialist centres.

**Jo Churchill:**

Information on the proportion of pancreatic cancer patients in England prescribed with pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) is not available in the format requested.

No assessment has been made of rates of prescription of PERT, though we recognise that its use in the treatment of pancreatic cancer can improve patients' ability recover from treatment and their quality of life. The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline on the diagnosis and management of pancreatic cancer describes best practice in the care and treatment of patients with pancreatic cancer, including supporting their nutritional needs. Whilst National Health Service organisations and clinicians should take guidelines and quality standards into account, it is the responsibility of clinicians to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of each patient.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned an audit into pancreatic cancer and continue to work with Prostate Cancer UK to raise awareness of PERT, including sharing guidance with Cancer Alliances.

## ■ Perinatal Mortality: Ethnic Groups

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[10630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the disparities of race and ethnicity enclosed in the latest still birth data published by the ONS.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Chief Midwifery Officer for England is leading work to reduce health inequalities around maternal and perinatal mortality. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working to develop an equity strategy that will focus on reducing disparities. In January, the Department launched a £7.6 million Health and Wellbeing Fund which aims to reduce health inequalities among new mothers and babies.

## ■ Pharmacy

**Peter Dowd:** [\[8634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to support pharmacies to play a greater role in primary care provision.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 five-year deal, agreed with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee in 2019, sets out how community pharmacy will further integrate into the National Health Service. This sets the ambition that community pharmacies will deliver more clinical services, embed their role in providing advice on medicines and preventing ill-health and further utilise the skills in community pharmacy to support the wider NHS

NHS111 can now refer patients to a community pharmacist for minor illness or the urgent supply of a prescribed medicine. At the end of 2020, we extended this service to general practitioner surgeries, who can now also formally refer patients to community pharmacy for consultation. We expect to introduce more clinical services in community pharmacy and play a larger role in primary care provision.

## ■ Pharmacy: Finance

**Peter Dowd:** [\[8633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken steps to provide funding to increase resources and training to strengthen the workforce of local pharmacies.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) on pharmacists' education and training reforms. The GPhC's new initial education and training standards which will be implemented from September, will transform the education and training of pharmacists, so they are able to play a much greater role in providing clinical care to patients and the public.

Training is also available for specific new services that are introduced in community pharmacy. For example, NHS111 and general practitioners can refer patients to community pharmacies for urgent medicines supply and minor illnesses under the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service. Free training is available for pharmacists that have signed up for this service to learn and practise new skills and to gaining confidence in performing clinical examinations.

## ■ Primary Health Care

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[8573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the level of demand compared to supply on primary care services in (a) Brighton and Hove and (b) nationally relating to patients coming forward to

seek treatment (i) having not sought treatment during the pandemic, (ii) due to long covid or other factors relating to covid-19 and (iii) mental ill-health over and above usual levels of patient presentation; what estimate he has made of the funding required to meet demand for services; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Whilst demand for primary care remains high across Brighton and Hove and Sussex, appointment activity is in line with the national trends and is showing an approximate return to pre-pandemic levels. On some national indicators, such as booking online appointments, Brighton and Hove has a higher rate of activity than the national average. Brighton residents have access to a 'long' COVID-19 assessment service which has accepted 370 referrals between January and May 2021.

On 7 October 2020, NHS England announced a £10 million investment to support people with 'long' COVID-19, with £120 million made available from April to September 2021 via the general practitioner capacity fund.

The Brighton and Hove Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) service has seen a rise in demand and further investment is planned this year to expand a range of support and services.

There has been no national assessment of the demand for primary care that is specifically related to all mental health conditions. However, we have made available an additional £270 million funding from November 2020 until September 2021 to ensure general practitioners and their teams are able to continue to support all patients.

■ **Respite Care**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[10505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) carers are able to secure adequate respite and (b) residential and non-residential respite care is available for the person they care for.

**Helen Whately:**

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

Day services and other forms of respite care are vital and we are working with local authorities, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure, where possible, the safe resumption of these services.

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

specific funding to adult social care services including day centre and respite services.

## ■ Respite Care: Coronavirus

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[10310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to help ensure that unpaid carers have been able to take a break from their caring role during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[10311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing an additional £50 per week to personal budgets for unpaid carers to help those carers access breaks from their caring responsibilities.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* The Government recognises that access to breaks provides important support for people with care needs and their carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have provided approximately £1.8 billion in specific funding for adult social care. This includes the £1.35 billion Infection Control Fund, which has been used towards supporting day centres to re-open safely.

In addition, we have also supported the provision of respite within caring 'bubbles' ensuring that the COVID-19 restrictions allowed household mixing when providing care and respite for other carers. We have also provided over £2 billion this year to the Better Care Fund which local authorities can access to fund social care services in their areas including respite services.

No assessment has been made of providing an extra £50 to personal budgets to help carers access breaks from their caring. Local authorities are responsible for assessing individual's eligibility for support as set out in the Care Act 2014. Carers have legal rights to an assessment of, and support for, their needs where eligible. Following the assessment, the local authority will decide if the carer is eligible for support. Support could be provided by the local authority, or in the form of a direct payment or personal budget.

**Debbie Abrahams:** [\[10388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of carers able to access breaks from their caring responsibilities since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Debbie Abrahams:** [\[10389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the proposal by charities supporting Carers Week 2021 for £1.2 billion additional Government funding for carers' breaks.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* The Government recognises that access to breaks and respite provides important support for people with care needs and their carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have provided approximately £1.8 billion in specific funding for adult social care. This includes the £1.35 billion Infection Control Fund, which has been used towards supporting day centres to re-open safely.

We are continuing to work with local authorities, in collaboration with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure, where possible, the safe resumption of these services. In addition we have provided over £2 billion this year to the Better Care Fund which local authorities can access to fund social care services in their areas, including respite services.

**■ Sickle Cell Diseases****Alex Norris:**[\[7923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the (a) availability of and (b) access to innovative treatments for sickle cell disease in the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is currently developing guidance on the use of crizanlizumab for preventing sickle cell crises in sickle cell disease and expects to publish its final recommendation in September 2021. In addition, NICE's appraisal of voxelotor for treating sickle cell disease is anticipated to begin in September 2021, with an expected publication date of August 2022.

The Government published the UK Rare Diseases Framework in January 2021, outlining four key priorities to improve the lives of those living with rare diseases, such as sickle cell disease. One of these priorities is improving access to specialist care, treatment and drugs. The Framework will be followed by nation-specific action plans, detailing how each nation of the United Kingdom will meet the shared priorities of the Framework.

**Alex Norris:**[\[7924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to help improve the (a) availability of and (b) access to innovative treatments for sickle cell disease.

**Jo Churchill:**

On 9th January 2021, the Government published the United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework, outlining four key priorities to improve the lives of those living with rare diseases such as sickle cell disease. Improving access to specialist care, treatment and drugs is listed as one of these priorities, alongside helping patients get a final diagnosis faster, increasing awareness of rare diseases among healthcare professionals, and better coordination of care. The Framework will be followed by



nation-specific action plans, detailing how each nation of the UK will meet the shared priorities of the Framework.

### ■ **Surgery: Regulation**

**Justin Madders:** [\[10449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to regulate surgical care practitioners.

**Helen Whately:**

Following the 2017 consultation on the regulation of medical associate professions there are no plans to introduce statutory regulation of surgical care practitioners at this time.

### ■ **Vaccination: Children**

**Mr Jonathan Lord:** [\[5192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what lessons he has learned from the covid-19 vaccine deployment that can be applied to the routine childhood immunisation programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is reflecting on the lessons learned from the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and exploring how they can be applied to all immunisation programmes, including the routine childhood immunisation programme.

### ■ **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

**Mark Pawsey:** [\[10356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the UK delegation to the Ninth Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference in November 2021 takes the opportunity to speak about the UK's progress on the implementation of tobacco harm reduction policies and the role of vaping in making that progress.

**Mark Pawsey:** [\[10357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer on 18 May 2021 to Question 170 on Tobacco, in the context of the decision of the Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Second Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP2) to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products to meet virtually, if he will extend the UK's delegation to include (a) advocates for the Government's harm reduction policies and (b) consumers as per the recommendations of the all-party Parliamentary group for Vaping's inquiry into COP9 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control published on 31 March 2021.

**Jo Churchill:**

Departmental officials will be attending the virtual Ninth World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of the Parties (COP9). Officials from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will be attending the virtual Second Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP2). As COP9 and MOP2 are Government-led events, no other representatives will be attending.

Whilst the agenda and papers for COP9 and MOP2 have not been circulated, officials will use the opportunity to speak about the United Kingdom's progress on the implementation of tobacco control policies. This will include, where relevant, the role of nicotine replacement therapy and e-cigarettes in supporting smokers to quit.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Asylum: Correspondence****Alex Cunningham:**[\[11553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will undertake an audit to ensure that accurate and up-to-date addresses are held for asylum seekers by (a) her Department and (b) accommodation providers.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office asylum accommodation providers maintain accurate and up to date addresses for all supported asylum seekers and systems and processes are in place to ensure that the department records are updated in advance of any change of address. As part of the lessons learnt and project closure, we will review how such address data was used during the transition of the new ASPEN card provider

**■ Asylum: Finance****Alex Cunningham:**[\[11552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will undertake an urgent and full review of the ASPEN card contract transition; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

The PrePaid Financial Services (PFS) solution is a well-established Mastercard pre-paid card which is used by organisations across the UK as well as abroad and has undergone over 5 months of rigorous testing to integrate with Home Office systems. A significant majority of service users have received their new Aspen card, have successfully activated it and are using it.

The relevant Home Office teams continue to proactively work with all appropriate delivery partners to provide resolutions for any issues faced since the new service went live on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Cash payments were made available in emergencies. This was in place to happen well before the transition took place.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[11554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many calls the Migrant Help service received about Aspen cards on each day from 21 May and 4 June 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

We have been working with Migrant Help to reduce call volumes and monitor waiting times, which included increases of resources prior to and after the card service change.

Whilst we saw a significant increase in call volumes over the period 21<sup>st</sup> May until 4<sup>th</sup> June we are not able to categorise the nature of the calls at this point.

#### ■ **British Nationality: EU Nationals**

**Peter Grant:**

[\[11592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the requirement for people who have proved their residency rights through the EU Settlement Scheme to do so again when applying for British Citizenship.

**Kevin Foster:**

The EUSS only looks at physical presence and not lawful residence, and so there may be cases where nationality caseworkers need to satisfy themselves the person was here lawfully, when applicants are applying for British citizenship.

This is not a new requirement and was an assessment we have always been making. In most cases this will not involve any additional evidence, for example where the person was working in the UK and so clearly in the UK in accordance with EEA regulations.

There may be cases, however, where it is not clear on what basis a person was in the UK and so we will need to make further enquiries to establish lawful residence. This is a statutory requirement and cannot be ignored and applies to all applicants for British Citizenship.

We have amended the application forms to ensure we can gather as much of this information upfront at the application stage where possible.

#### ■ **Crime and Justice Task Force**

**Crispin Blunt:**

[R] [\[11459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 8523, when the Crime and Justice Task Force superseded the Drug Strategy Board; whether information on Task Force meetings will be publicly available; how many meetings have included drug strategy on the agenda since the Task Force superseded the Drug Strategy Board; and who was in attendance at each of those meetings.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Crime and Justice Task Force was established in January 2020. It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

**■ Crimes of Violence****Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[7996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce levels of violent crime.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[7997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle knife crime.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is determined to crack down on the scourge of violence devastating our communities, and tackling violent crime, including knife crime, is a priority.

Violent crime can have devastating and long-lasting impacts on victims, families and communities. This is why the Home Office has invested over £136.5 million over three years (19/20 – 21/22) to support the police to take targeted action in the 18 areas in England and Wales most affected by serious violence; £105.5m, over three years, in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) to tackle the root causes of violence; £200m over ten years in the Youth Endowment Fund for early intervention and prevention; and this year we announced an additional investment of up to £23 million for new early intervention programmes that will help stop young people from being drawn into violence.

Across England and Wales, we are recruiting 20,000 additional police officers and increasing the amount of funding available to the policing system for 2021/22 by up to £636 million, totalling £15.8 billion. 8,771 additional police officers have been recruited as part of the Police Uplift Programme at 31 March this year, all working to keep our communities safe.

We also continue to strengthen the law on knife crime and serious violence. The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 introduced Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPO). These preventative orders enable the courts to place positive intervention requirements as well as other measures including prohibition to carry a knife on individuals to help the police steer those most at risk away from serious violence and to set them on a more positive path.

In March the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill was introduced. The bill includes a duty on public sector bodies to take a joined-up approach to addressing serious violence; the requirement for local agencies to review the circumstances when an adult homicide takes place involving an offensive weapon; and Serious

Violence Reduction Orders, which give the police the power to stop and search known knife and offensive weapons carriers.

■ **Development Aid: Police**

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[10672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria her Department uses in Overseas Security and Justice Assessments to determine the deployment of UK police abroad; how those criteria are used; and who uses those criteria.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The HMG Overseas Security Justice Assessment (OSJA) guidance issued by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is followed. This sets out a 4 staged process which inform officials' and Ministerial (if high risk) decisions to authorise a deployment:

1. Stage 1 is an assessment of the human rights risks in country carried out by FCDO posts.
1. Stage 2 is an assessment carried out by operational partner(s) responsible for providing assistance of whether there is a serious risk that the proposed assistance might directly or significantly contribute to any of the following human rights risks identified in Stage 1:
  - I. Use of the death penalty.
  - II. Unlawful or arbitrary arrest or detention.
  - III. Torture or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment (CIDT) including standards of detention.
  - IV. Unlawful killing and/or use of force (e.g. disproportionate, indiscriminate).
  - V. Enforced disappearance.
  - VI. Unfair trial or denial of justice.
  - VII. Unlawful interference with democratic rights (e.g. freedom of assembly or expression).
  - VIII. Violations of the rights of the child including recruitment or use of child soldiers.
  - IX. Refoulement (forced return where danger of torture or CIDT).
  - X. Human trafficking and/or sexual violence.
  - XI. Persecution of an identifiable group (e.g. on racial, gender, religious or ethnic grounds) in combination with any of the above violations.
  - XII. Other violations not already identified or provocation or prolonging of armed conflict or terrorism.
  - XIII. Support to terrorism or undermine the principles of conflict prevention as defined in HMG's Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS).
1. Stage 3 summarises any mitigations to the risks identified in Stages 1 and 2.

1. Stage 4 identifies the overall risk level, which includes consideration by the authorising department of any associated political and reputational risk.

The OSJA Guidance can be accessed on the Internet via the following link: [OSJA Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

## ■ **Drugs: Organised Crime**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[8765]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle county line drug gangs in West Yorkshire.

### **Kit Malthouse:**

This Government is determined to crack down on the county lines gangs who are exploiting our children and have a devastating impact on our communities. That is why on 20 January the Government announced a further £40m dedicated investment for 2021/22 to tackle drugs supply and county lines and surge our activity against these ruthless gangs. This investment has allowed us to expand and build upon our successful County Lines Programme, established in November 2019.

Since it was launched, in November 2019, our County Lines Programme has already seen more than 780 lines closed, over 5,100 arrests, £2.9 million in cash and significant quantities of drugs seized, and more than 1,200 vulnerable people safeguarded.

The greatest number of lines originate from the areas covered by the Metropolitan Police Service, West Midlands Police, and Merseyside Police, yet we recognise county lines is a cross-border issue and are funding the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) to co-ordinate the national law enforcement response and support local forces.

The most recent county lines 'week of intensification', which all police forces took part in also resulted in over 1,000 arrests, saw more than 250 weapons seized and over 1,000 individuals safeguarded. Last year forces across the UK also received support from the NCLCC, resulting in over 1100 arrests, 245 individuals safeguarded, and seizures of 154 weapons, £600k cash and significant quantities of drugs.

Between 2019 and 2022, £10.11 million has been invested into the West Yorkshire PCC to develop the West Yorkshire VRU. The VRU has brought together key partners to identify the local drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them. Additionally, West Yorkshire Police have been allocated £8.22m, over three years, to support the police to take targeted action on serious violence. This investment supports West Yorkshire Police to work closely with the Regional Organised Crime Unit to monitor and map organised crime groups and urban street gangs who are involved in County Lines and Drug supply both within West Yorkshire and into other counties.

## ■ Educational Visits: EU Countries

**Anna McMorrin:** [\[10726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of leaving the List of Travellers visa scheme on educational and recreational school visits to mainland Europe; and if she will take steps with the Secretary of State for Education to support improved travel arrangements for those visits.

**Kevin Foster:**

The List of Travellers is an EU scheme and the EU announced in July last year the UK would no longer be part of it from 1 January 2021.

The UK Government decided to continue to accept travel to the UK on the List of Travellers until 1 October to allow this change to be made at the same time as the change on the acceptance of EU/EEA and Swiss identity cards.

It is for the EU to decide on what documents it requires for travel to the EU, just as the UK can now determine our own requirements now we have left.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Catherine West:** [\[10550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish her timetable for publishing revised guidance on the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on applications under the EU Settlement Scheme after its withdrawal on 6 May 2021; and if she will make it her policy to (a) publish and (b) publicise that guidance in time for applicants to review its contents before the EU Settlement Scheme's 30 June 2021 deadline.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government is working to publish revised COVID-19 guidance for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The guidance will be available on GOV.UK in advance of the 30 June 2021 deadline.

The end of the transition period at 11pm on 31 December 2020 remains the point by which EEA and Swiss citizens need to have been resident in the UK to be eligible for the EUSS. There are no plans to extend the deadline for those who wished to travel to the UK for the first time in order to apply to the EUSS, but did not do so. Travel is and was permitted from the EEA and Switzerland for the purpose of taking up residence in the UK, subject to complying with the relevant local public health regulations in each nation.

EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members who were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 and were outside the UK on this date are eligible to apply to the EUSS, including from overseas, by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members, who were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, are permitted to be absent from the UK for a period of up to 12 months without breaking their continuity of residence where this is for an important reason, which can include COVID-19. The revised guidance will provide additional flexibility to those EEA and Swiss citizens who would otherwise have broken their

continuous qualifying period of residence because of COVID-19. The guidance will set out a non-exhaustive list of examples for what may constitute permitted absence for a COVID-19 related reason.

**Catherine West:**

[\[10551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how she plans to take into account the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on international travel when considering applications to the EU Settlement Scheme where the applicant was unable to be resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 due to travel restrictions.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government is working to publish revised COVID-19 guidance for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The guidance will be available on GOV.UK in advance of the 30 June 2021 deadline.

The end of the transition period at 11pm on 31 December 2020 remains the point by which EEA and Swiss citizens need to have been resident in the UK to be eligible for the EUSS. There are no plans to extend the deadline for those who wished to travel to the UK for the first time in order to apply to the EUSS, but did not do so. Travel is and was permitted from the EEA and Switzerland for the purpose of taking up residence in the UK, subject to complying with the relevant local public health regulations in each nation.

EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members who were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 and were outside the UK on this date are eligible to apply to the EUSS, including from overseas, by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members, who were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, are permitted to be absent from the UK for a period of up to 12 months without breaking their continuity of residence where this is for an important reason, which can include COVID-19. The revised guidance will provide additional flexibility to those EEA and Swiss citizens who would otherwise have broken their continuous qualifying period of residence because of COVID-19. The guidance will set out a non-exhaustive list of examples for what may constitute permitted absence for a COVID-19 related reason.

**Kevin Brennan:**

[\[11485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Kevin Brennan:**

[\[11486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what consideration will be given to applications submitted by vulnerable individuals to the EU Settlement Scheme beyond 30 June 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

There are no plans to extend the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.



The Home Office has invested nearly £8 million in marketing campaigns to encourage EU citizens and their family members to apply to the scheme. We recently launched a new wave of UK advertising to ensure EU citizens and their family members are aware of the deadline and know they need to apply. We are also working closely with employers, local authorities and charities to raise awareness.

We have continued to receive and process thousands of applications a day to the scheme throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 5.4 million applications received, and over 5.1 million applications concluded by 30 April 2021.

We are committed to making sure everybody eligible for the scheme can apply, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. There is significant help available for applicants from a network of 72 organisations across the UK grant funded by the Home Office with £22 million to help vulnerable people apply to the EUSS, including after the 30 June deadline.

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, we have made clear where a person eligible for status under the scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply. Non-exhaustive guidance on reasonable grounds for submitting a late application was published on 1 April 2021, and includes where there are compelling practical or compassionate reasons why a person may have been unaware of the requirement to apply to the scheme by the deadline or may have failed to do so, including where someone else would have been responsible for making an application on behalf of a vulnerable person.

**Kevin Brennan:**

**[11487]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Office of National Statistics to estimate the number of eligible EU nationals who have not yet submitted an application to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

Published EUSS figures refer specifically to applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme and cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK.

The published figures include non-EEA family members, Irish nationals, and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU population.

Furthermore, the population estimates do not take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

The Office for National Statistics published a further explaining note discussing the strengths and limitations of UK Population Estimates

[Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/population-and-demography/population-by-country-of-birth-and-nationality)

ONS are currently transforming their population and migration statistics to put administrative data at the core of what they do. The latest information on their work programme and longer term plans to transform migration and population statistics was published on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

[Population and migration statistics system transformation – overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

**Paul Blomfield:** [11534]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the EU Settlement Scheme have waited more than three months for a decision as at 1 June 2021.

**Paul Blomfield:** [11535]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the EU Settlement Scheme have waited more than six months for a decision as at 1 June 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Our aim is to process all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme as expeditiously as possible. Complete applications are usually processed in around five working days.

More information about processing times for applications under the scheme is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-application-processing-times/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-current-expected-processing-times-for-applications>

**Paul Blomfield:** [11536]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the EU Settlement Scheme have waited more than twelve months for a decision as at 1 June 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Our aim is to process all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme as expeditiously as possible. Complete applications are usually processed in around five working days.

More information about processing times for applications under the scheme is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-application-processing-times/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-current-expected-processing-times-for-applications>

**Alun Cairns:** [11541]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been submitted to the EU Settlement Scheme to date; and how many of those application have been granted.

**Kevin Foster:**

The latest figures can be found on the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics' web page available at:

[EU Settlement Scheme statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics).

**Wendy Chamberlain:****[11673]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional resources the Government has provided to (a) the EU Settlement Scheme Resolution Centre and (b) relevant grant-funded third sector organisations to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deal with people applying for the EU Settlement Scheme ahead of the 30 June 2021 deadline.

**Kevin Foster:**

Resource for the EUSS Resolution Centre is kept under close review and additional resource is made available as required.

Regarding grant funded organisations we have already awarded £17 million of funding to a network of now 72 organisations, including charities and community organisations across the UK, to ensure important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach, and no one is left behind. These organisations have helped more than 250,000 vulnerable people to apply to the EUSS already.

In addition, we recently announced a further £4.5 million for the Grant Funded Network so it can continue to provide a wide range of invaluable support across the UK, including after the 30 June deadline, ensuring those most at-risk continue to get the help they need.

**■ Migrant Workers: Denmark****Virginia Crosbie:****[10711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Danish workers have been turned back from the UK's borders since 1 January 2021; and what steps she is taking to enforce the work permit and cross border rules that apply to Danish citizens working in the UK, particularly those in the offshore and the wind farm sector.

**Kevin Foster:**

EU Nationals who do not have status under the EUSS and are not eligible to apply for it, can enter the UK for up to six months as visitors, visa free. However, now freedom of movement has ended, those coming to work or study must prove they meet our entry requirements.

In addition to the immigration rules, any travel to the UK at this time must be in line with the Border Health Requirements relating to the global pandemic set by the UK Government and the three devolved administrations. We urge people to check these requirements carefully before travelling, as entry to the UK may also be denied by Border Force on the basis of failure to comply with these regulations.

Border Force treat all arrivals with respect and consider each passengers situation on an individual basis to check everyone entering the UK has the right to do so.

We have issued instructions to our officers to reinforce the principle; in all cases there exists a presumption in favour of bail.

The Home Office published data on how many people are detained or returned on gov.uk. the latest publication can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2020/how-many-people-are-detained-or-retained](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2020/how-many-people-are-detained-or-retained)

## ■ **Police: Training**

**Janet Daby:** [7938]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what specialist training is given to police officers attending to people experiencing mental health crises; and what consideration is given to the use of physical force in those circumstances.

**Kit Malthouse:**

All officers receive comprehensive training in assessing the potential vulnerabilities of a person. This includes training on awareness of mental health issues, skills for managing a person at the point of contact, de-escalation skills and understanding the dangers of using restraint techniques with vulnerable people.

Training on mental-ill health is integrated throughout the initial police learning programme which all new recruits must complete. Many individual forces have also gone on to develop their own training programmes, including joint training with partner agencies and local Mental Health trusts.

In October 2016, the College published Authorised Professional Practice on mental health, and this guidance supports all police officers, including custody staff, in responding to people suffering with mental health issues. This training package is currently being reviewed with a planned release shortly.

## ■ **Slavery: Victim Support Schemes**

**Alex Norris:** [11638]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons subcontractors are not permitted to share high level, non-identifying data secured within the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract for the purposes of anti-trafficking research.

**Alex Norris:** [11639]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Home Office plans to publish an explanation of its prohibition of the use of any data which results from the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract.

**Alex Norris:****[11640]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when organisations will be permitted to share their learning in the form of high level, non-identifying data from their front-line work undertaken under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC), a lot of personal and protected data is generated, stored and processed to enable delivery of key services to vulnerable victims.

The Single Competent Authority (SCA), who manage the MSVC Contract delivered by The Salvation Army (TSA), is currently reviewing how such data can be appropriately handled for research purposes.

It is imperative to get the balance right between ensuring that rich data can support insights into key operational and policy activities, and ensuring that (when such data is utilised) it is done in ways which are fully compliant with data protection rules and are transparent to the victims themselves.

Service providers are already able to engage with TSA and the SCA should they want to provide high level, non-identifying data for the purposes of research.

The SCA has been communicating with MSVCC service providers about this ongoing work, and the potential next steps in agreeing a contractual mechanism to manage any such future research.

**■ Visas: Turkey****Peter Grant:****[10482]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for Turkish Businessperson visas were (a) submitted, (b) successful and (c) refused in 2020; and how many of those applications are still to be processed.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes data on ECAA Business Persons in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Data on applications for ECAA Business Persons are published in table Vis\_D01 of the [entry clearance visas applications and outcomes](#) dataset. Data on the number of ECAA Business Persons issued and refused are included in table Vis\_D02. These data may be selected using the 'ECAA Business person' visa type subgroup.

Information on how to use the [entry clearance visas applications and outcomes](#) dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to year ending March 2021.

Home Office Migration Statistics do not capture the number of Turkish Businessperson visa applications which are still to be processed.

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION****■ House of Commons: Libraries****Anne Marie Morris:****[10395]**

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what plans there are to provide a replacement to the Derby Gate library facilities for the staff of hon. Members.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The Derby Gate library was closed on 3 September 2018 to make way for works initiated by the Northern Estates Programme.

In anticipation of the closure, the Library worked with Members and In-House Services to identify alternative workspace and service point(s) for use by Members' staff. The Library considered sharing space within the House of Lords eLibrary, based in Millbank, though this did not meet requirements.

Instead, in July 2018 the Administration Committee approved plans for a new Customer Services Hub based in Portcullis House (PCH) – [Administration Committee's Notes of discussion, 23 July 2018](#). Informed by feedback from Members that a 'one stop' service centre would improve visibility and access to services, the Hub initially provided access to Library, Digital, Security and procedural services in addition to some, albeit limited, access to workspace for use by both Members and Members' staff.

The Library ceased to provide a permanent service-point in the Customer Services Hub from January 2020. This was in response to low usage in 2019 and, in addition, feedback from Members and Members' staff that additional workspace was required. By moving from the Hub, the Library thus freed-up additional space. This decision followed the principle, agreed by the House of Commons Commission in May 2018, that the Library and other services should reduce their footprint on the Northern Estate to make way for additional Members' workspace when required – [House of Commons Commission Decisions, 14 May 2018](#).

All the same, the Library continues to welcome Members' staff into the Oriel Room (the reception area of the main Library suite within the Palace) to browse briefing papers, request book loans and place requests face to face with Library staff. Members' staff are also welcome to consult documents in the Reference Room of the Library, on request. Library services can also be browsed online: see [Services for MPs and MPs' staff - House of Commons Library](#).

The space previously occupied by the Derby Gate library will return to use in 2021, once works have been completed. The space has been reconfigured as a meeting room and open space, available to Members and Members' staff for meetings and quiet work. This arrangement was requested by the Administration Committee in May 2020, to compensate Members for the loss of other meeting space in 1 Parliament Street – [Administration Committee's Note of discussion, 18 May 2020](#). Please also

note that, from September 2021, space within Richmond House – including the Richmond House business lounge – will also become available to Members' staff.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Building Safety Fund

**Stephen Timms:** [\[11463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken ahead of the Building Safety Fund application deadline to ensure that applications are submitted for all eligible buildings; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The timelines for the Building Safety Fund were intended to incentivise building owners to speed up plans to identify and remediate unsafe buildings. The deadlines for the Fund have been set based on what we know about registrants and their readiness to be able to deliver projects. We recognise, however, that meeting these deadlines may not be possible in all circumstances, for instance where applicants find that they do not have sufficient time to complete a robust and satisfactory procurement process in order to meet the 30 June deadline. More time may be permitted on a case by case basis, providing applicants continue to keep delivery partners fully informed and provide them with realistic timetables.

The announcement on 10 February of an additional £3.5 billion of funding provides assurance for residents that all eligible applications to the Building Safety Fund will be able to proceed. All registrants should continue to ensure that everything is done to maximise the pace of remediation and to continue to make progress with their applications to the Building Safety Fund to ensure that remedial works are carried out as soon as possible.

**Lucy Powell:** [\[11562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the average fee level for managing agents is for grants under the Building Safety Fund.

**Lucy Powell:** [\[11563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the Building Safety Fund that will be spent on managing agent fees.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Building Safety Fund will cover all reasonable costs for eligible works that are necessary to remediate unsafe non-ACM cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings, including a range of direct project costs such as professional team fees and managing agents' fees in respect of administering qualifying expenditure. Reasonable costs must be informed by an industry standard approach to specification and procurement of works, having regard to cost benchmarks

established from comparable projects. Higher than expected costs will be challenged and will be subject to further scrutiny, and the level of grant may be reduced. The Department has not analysed managing agent fees across the Building Safety Fund given the cost benchmarking safeguards that are in place for each individual project.

### ■ **Buildings: Insulation**

**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[8528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the consultation entitled Review of the ban on the use of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We continue to analyse the responses, and will be publishing a Government response to the consultation.

### ■ **Buildings: Safety**

**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[8526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his planned timetable is for introducing the Building Safety Bill as announced in the Queen's Speech 2021.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Building Safety Bill was published in draft on 20 July 2020 and has undergone pre-legislative scrutiny by the HCLG Select Committee. The Government has been considering the Committee's report and recommendations and will introduce the Bill as soon as Parliamentary time allows. We recognise that these are important public safety measures, which is why the Government is committed to advancing the Bill as quickly as possible so that reforms can be implemented in a timely manner and residents can feel safe, and be safe, in their homes.

### ■ **English Language: Education**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[8660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether English language centres are eligible for expanded retail discount.

**Luke Hall:**

Local authorities are responsible for administering the expanded retail discount and will be reimbursed for the costs of providing the relief to ratepayers that meet the eligibility criteria, as set out in guidance published by the Department. The guidance states that properties eligible for the expanded retail discount are those that are wholly or mainly used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas, and live music venues; those used by members of the public for assembly and leisure; or hotel, guest and boarding premises, and self-catering accommodation. It is for local authorities to decide whether individual English language centres fall within one of these categories.



## ■ Hate Crime and Racial Discrimination: Ethnic Groups

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[11692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the use of the term Indian variant to refer to a variant of covid-19 on levels of (a) racism and (b) hate crime towards Indians and people of Indian heritage in the UK.

**Luke Hall:**

The World Health Organisation on 31<sup>st</sup> May announced a [new naming system](#) for SARS-CoV-2 variants, with a view to providing easy-to-pronounce, non-stigmatising labels, such as Delta Variant, and Public Health England has incorporated this into our own naming system.

We have one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to protect communities from hostility, violence and bigotry, and racism will continue to be tackled wherever it is found.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[11465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to take enforcement action in cases where high rise residential buildings with dangerous cladding have not been made safe; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government itself cannot take enforcement action, but where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress in removing unsafe cladding then they should expect enforcement action by local authorities or Fire and Rescue Authorities who share responsibility for enforcement relating to fire safety.

The Government will support local regulators where enforcement action is taken. We have established a Joint Inspection Team (JIT) to support local authorities in taking enforcement action on building owners with regards to inaction on removing unsafe ACM cladding. The JIT's remit has also been expanded to include non-ACM cladding and it is providing training to help build capability in local authorities.

The Fire Safety Act has also clarified that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the 'Fire Safety Order') applies to external wall systems and will put beyond doubt that Fire and Rescue Authorities can enforce against and where necessary, pursue prosecution if Responsible Persons or those otherwise responsible under the Fire Safety Order fail to take appropriate fire safety measures with regards to unsafe cladding in multi-occupied residential buildings.

Further information on enforcement, including the number of buildings currently subject to enforcement action due to lack of progress on remediation, can be found in Building Safety Programme Monthly Data Release at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/aluminium-composite-material-cladding#acm-remediation-data> .

## ■ Housing: Fire Prevention

**Stephen Timms:** **[11462]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his most recent assessment is of the effectiveness of the EWS1 process for residential buildings.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 process is an industry designed valuation tool – it is not a Government form nor a legal requirement. MHCLG estimates that nearly 500,000 leaseholders should not require an EWS1 form, following the new EWS1 valuation guidance from RICS, published in March 2021.

Most major lenders, representing roughly 80% of the mortgage market, have said that they will adopt the RICS guidance, or already take an even more proportionate approach.

Recent data from one major lender suggests that an EWS1 already exists for 50% of mortgage applications where one is requested, and we are working with industry to ensure this picture only improves.

The Government continues to challenge industry on the use of the EWS1 process. We have requested data from lenders and surveyors so that we can understand how the RICS guidance is being applied, and the effect of the process on mortgage applications.

## ■ Landlords: Licensing

**Steve Reed:** **[11570]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 6305 on Landlords: Licensing, how many local authorities have requested approval from his Department for the extension of their landlord licensing scheme in each of the last four years; and for applications made in each of those years how many of those requests are outstanding.

**Eddie Hughes:**

All schemes are assessed using the same framework, regardless of whether they are putting in a place a new scheme or are renewals or extensions. Since 2016 the Secretary of State for Housing has received 21 applications for a selective licensing scheme.

**Steve Reed:** **[11571]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 6305 on Landlords: Licensing, what the average time taken by his Department is to respond to requests from local authorities to (a) put in place and (b) renew a Landlord licensing scheme.

**Eddie Hughes:**

All schemes are assessed using the same framework, regardless of whether they are putting in a place a new scheme or are renewals or extensions. We have experienced some delays in processing applications due to COVID-19 pressures, but are working to progress applications swiftly.

**Local Government Finance****Steve Reed:**[\[11569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department is planning to provide additional financial support to local authorities in England after June 2021.

**Luke Hall:**

The Government has allocated over £12 billion directly to councils since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure they are able to meet the additional expenditure and income pressures in their area.

We will continue to work with local government as the pandemic progresses, including through specially tailored financial monitoring, to ensure we understand the pressures they are experiencing. We would ask that any local authority faced with unmanageable pressures or with concerns about their future financial position should approach MHCLG for discussion. Future financial support for councils will be determined as part of the planned Spending Review later this year.

**Alicia Kearns:**[\[8760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the resumption of the Fair Funding Review.

**Luke Hall:**

The Government announced last year that it would not proceed with the implementation of the Review of Relative Needs and Resources (formerly the Fair Funding Review) and 75% Business Rates Retention in 2021-22. This decision was broadly welcomed by the sector as it has allowed both the government and councils to focus on meeting the immediate public health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once the pandemic is through, we will take stock of the demands faced by councils and the resources available to meet them and will decide on the timetable for future funding reform. Final decisions will be taken in the context of the upcoming Spending Review.

**Local Government: Equality****Rachael Maskell:**[\[8667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing for cities to become inclusive cities.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[8668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support he is providing to support local authorities to assess their own inclusion policies.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[8669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how he assesses local authorities on the progress they are making for advancing inclusion within each organisation.

**Luke Hall:**

All public bodies, including local authorities, should encourage diversity and inclusion within their organisations. MHCLG does not monitor or assess local authorities on this.

## ■ Religious Hatred: Hinduism

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[11691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to tackle Hinduphobia in the UK.

**Luke Hall:**

The Government is committed to tackling hatred against people of all faiths, including the Hindu community. The Hate Crime Action Plan (2016) and Refresh (2018) set out our plans to tackle hatred directed at anyone for their race, religion, sexuality, disability or gender identity, which includes raising awareness of hate crime and encouraging reporting. We are now looking at ways to renew our strategy and will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders from religious communities.

## ■ Religious Hatred: Islam

**Steve Reed:** [\[11572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department holds data on how many and what proportion of local authorities in England have adopted the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia.

**Luke Hall:**

The definition proposed by the APPG on British Muslims is not in line with the Equality Act 2010 and would have severe consequences for freedom of speech, which is why the Government does not accept it or hold data on its adoption.

Government does not, and will not, tolerate anti-Muslim hatred in any form and will continue to combat such discrimination and intolerance wherever it occurs.

## ■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[8002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support the re-opening of high-streets as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

**Luke Hall:**

In March we announced a new £56 million Welcome Back Fund (WBF) to support a safe and successful reopening of our high streets and seaside resorts, giving people the reassurance that they can shop and socialise in a COVID-secure way as restrictions ease.

The WBF expands on the £50 million Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) announced in May 2020, doubling local authority funding allocations and significantly increasing the scope of eligible activity to give people safer options to reunite with friends and family.

This funding builds on the comprehensive £385 billion package of support to help businesses that have been affected by COVID-19 including Business Grants and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. This is in addition to longer-term, structural funding to support our high streets and town centres such as the £3.6 billion Towns Fund and £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund.

## ■ Waking Watch Relief Fund

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[11464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how long he estimates recently introduced waking watch services will be in operation before they can be replaced with effective alarm systems funded through the Waking Watch Relief Fund.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government launched the £30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund to incentivise buildings to install a common alarm system and reduce the dependency on Waking Watch in as many buildings as possible, thereby reducing the burden of expensive waking watch measures on leaseholders. The Waking Watch Relief Fund reopened for all buildings across England from 26 May until 24 June. We are urging building owners to act swiftly to reduce the financial effect of waking watch measures. Where grant funding is provided, we expect applicants to install alarms as quickly as possible.

## ■ Westferry Printworks: Planning Permission

**Steve Reed:**

[\[11568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when a Minister will be appointed to consider the Westferry Printworks development, PA/18/01877/A1 in Tower Hamlets.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The public inquiry for the redetermination of this appeal closed on 26 May. A Minister to determine the appeal will be appointed once the Department has received the Planning Inspector's Report.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Antony Higginbotham:**[\[900753\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the potential benefits of international trade for the North West.

**Graham Stuart:**

Burnley and the wider North West economy already benefit from the higher productivity and better-quality jobs associated with international trade. According to new experimental research, 630,000 jobs in the region were estimated to be linked to exports in 2016, and Foreign Direct Investment projects created over 5,000 new jobs in 2019-20. We are confident the new Free Trade Agreements we are striking around the world will create even more opportunities for Burnley companies and that this increased trade will help level up the UK economy further.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Import Duties****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[11504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 8561 on Electric Vehicles: Import Duties, how many of the UK's existing trade agreements do not allow for tariff-free access for exports of electric vehicles.

**Greg Hands:**

Tariff-free access for UK exports of electric vehicles is provided by the EU as well as 33 of 67 countries the UK has concluded agreements with, including Japan, South Korea, Switzerland and Turkey. A further 20 countries provide staged preferential tariff reductions until full liberalisation, mainly by 2023.

There are 9 countries that do not offer tariff-free access for exports, and 5 that offer partial tariff-free access. These countries are largely part of Economic Partnership Agreements which are development-focussed free trade agreements, where the UK has usually agreed to liberalise its markets to a greater extent than its developing country partners, including with Kenya and the Pacific States, and remain unchanged from access granted under the original EU agreements.

## ■ Food: Imports

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[11677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on the environment of food imports resulting from the trade deal between the UK and Australia.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government has always been clear that any deals it signs will not threaten the UK's ability to meet its environmental commitments or its membership of international environmental agreements. The Government is seeking a deal with Australia that will further environmental and climate policy priorities and the UK will not compromise on high environmental protection.

The Government carried out a public consultation and scoping assessment for its free trade agreement negotiation with Australia, which can be found on the Government's website. This preliminary scoping assessment considered illustrative scenarios.

Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment will be published prior to implementation.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Animal Welfare

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[900756\]](#)

What recent assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of her Department's trade policies on the protection of animal welfare.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's manifesto is clear that we are firmly committed to upholding our high standards. Having left the EU, we get to decide how we set and maintain our own animal welfare laws, standards and regulations. The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations, taking account of animal welfare considerations, to ensure any future trade deals live up to the values of farmers and consumers across the UK.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Canada

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[7968\]](#)

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

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-Canada Trade Continuity Agreement (TCA) entered into force on 1 April. It facilitates bilateral trade worth £17.7bn in 2020. On 18 May, the Government launched a public Call for Input on how this deal might be improved for UK businesses and consumers. Later this year negotiations will begin for a new and ambitious trade deal with Canada that goes even further in key areas of mutual interest.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Central America

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[7977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help increase the volume of trade between the UK and Central America.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Last year, my Department successfully negotiated and brought into force the United Kingdom-Central America Association Agreement that maintains preferential trading conditions, providing certainty for businesses. Trade between the United Kingdom and countries party to this Agreement was worth £1.3bn in 2020.

My Department continues to work with our Central American partners to resolve market access barriers on issues such as procurement. We are sharing best regulatory practice to improve the ease of doing business and identifying opportunities for British businesses looking to enter the Central American markets.

## ■ Trade Agreements

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[11512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her planned timetable is for negotiating revised trade agreements with (a) Liechtenstein, (b) Switzerland, (c) Canada, (d) Singapore, (e) Israel, (f) Mexico, (g) Egypt, (h) North Macedonia, (i) Chile, (j) Morocco, (k) Ukraine, (l) Lebanon, (m) Jordan, (n) Tunisia, (o) Serbia, (p) Georgia, (q) Faroe Islands, (r) Moldova, (s) Albania, (t) Kosovo and (u) Palestine to enable companies using the duty-free provisions in the UK's new generation of freeports to access the tariff reductions available on UK exports to those countries.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom has already committed to beginning negotiations with Canada and Mexico by the end of 2021. HM Government will continue to keep all agreements under review, as we seek to improve benefits for all British businesses, including those operating in our freeports.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Australia

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[11602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of excluding the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism from the UK-Australia trade agreement.

**Greg Hands:**

The precise details of a free trade agreement with Australia are a matter for formal negotiations, and the Government would not seek to pre-empt these discussions.

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



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

**Chris Loder:**

[R] [\[900755\]](#)

What steps she is taking to support UK farmers during negotiations on a future trade deal with Australia.

**Greg Hands:**

A UK-Australia deal will open up new opportunities for British farming. British beef and lamb are the best in the world and a deal with Australia is a first step to joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and opening up new opportunities for our agri-food exports in growing CPTPP markets across four continents. Any deal we sign with Australia will also include protections for UK agriculture and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards.

#### ■ Trade Agreements: Iceland and Norway

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[11509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the new trade agreement reached in principle with Norway and Iceland on 4 June 2021 removes the prohibition clause on drawback of, or exemption from, customs duties in Title IV, Article 14 of the previous Agreement on Trade in Goods with Norway and Iceland signed on 10 December 2020.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The new trade deal will replace the previous Agreement on Trade in Goods signed on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and does not include prohibitions to the use of duty drawback and exemptions.

#### ■ Trade Agreements: Liechtenstein and Switzerland

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[11510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether points two and three of Article 1.4 of the new trade agreement reached in principle with Liechtenstein on 4 June 2021 means that the prohibition clause on drawback of, or exemption from, customs duties in Title IV, Article 14 of the previous agreement signed on 11 February 2019 with Liechtenstein and Switzerland remains in force.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[11511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether companies based in the UK's new generation of freeports will be able to (a) import goods duty free, (b) process them into finished goods and (c) export them to (i) Norway and Iceland and (ii) Liechtenstein on the same terms as companies based elsewhere in the UK under the agreement reached in principle with those countries on 4 June 2021.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom has agreed in principle an ambitious new trade agreement with Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, which goes further than any other trade agreement these countries have negotiated before with a free trade agreement partner.

For Norway and Iceland, it includes provision for companies in a British freeport to import goods, suspending the duty payable, carry out a certain minimum amount of working and processing specified by the agreement and then export to the countries that are party to the new agreement under preference. However, Liechtenstein's goods trading relationship with the United Kingdom continues to be governed by a separate agreement that was signed on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019. This agreement includes prohibitions on the use of duty drawback and exemptions, similar to those with other trading partners that are signatories to the Pan-European-Mediterranean Convention. We will continue to keep such agreements under review in order to maximise benefits for all British businesses, including those operating in freeports.

**■ Trade Agreements: USA****Jeremy Wright:**[\[900757\]](#)

What progress has she made towards a free trade agreement with the US.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

I am in close contact with Katherine Tai, the US Trade Representative. I am pleased the US has lifted tariffs on Whisky and I am working to lift Airbus Boeing dispute. We are continuing to make progress in Free Trade Agreement (FTA) discussions as well as working together on our broader trade agenda.

**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[900758\]](#)

What progress she has made towards a free trade agreement with the US.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

I am in close contact with Katherine Tai, the US Trade Representative. I am pleased the US has lifted tariffs on Whisky, and I am working to lift Airbus Boeing dispute. We are continuing to make progress in Free Trade Agreement (FTA) discussions as well as working together on our broader trade agenda.

**JUSTICE****■ Legal Aid Scheme****Mr David Lammy:**[\[11466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much funding the Government has allocated to legal aid in England and Wales in each financial year since 2010.

**Chris Philp:**

The Lord Chancellor has a duty to ensure that legal aid is made available in accordance with the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012),

for cases where the relevant criteria, such as the financial eligibility of the applicant and/or the degree of legal merit in their case, is met, where applicable.

The Ministry of Justice works within HM Treasury allocations as shown in the Main and Supplementary Estimates ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-main-estimates> ) each year. However, the nature of Legal Aid funding means that it is demand led, and as such the MoJ ensures sufficient allocation is made to cover the incurred costs.

Spend on legal aid since 2010 can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>, which currently shows expenditure up to and including December 2020.

## ■ Probate: Standards

**Sir Greg Knight:**

**[11482]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time taken is for a probate grant to be issued; what plans he has to reduce that time taken; what progress he has made in reducing the length of the time taken to process all probate cases in 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The most recently published information regarding combined waiting times for a grant of probate, on paper and digital cases, covers September 2020 to December 2020 and is published on gov.uk via Family Court Statistics Quarterly (Table 26):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2020>

Average time to grant issue for grants of Probate, England and Wales, quarterly Q2 2019 - Q4 2020 <sup>1,2,3</sup>

### PROBATE - ALL

Year	Quarter	Grants issued	Application submission to grant issue		Document receipt to grant issue <sup>4</sup>	
			Mean weeks	Median weeks	Mean weeks	Median weeks
2019	Q2 <sup>5</sup>	:	:	:	:	:
2,019	Q3	53,403	9.5	8.0	9.5	8.0
2,019	Q4	54,389	7.8	5.6	7.6	5.4
2020	Q1	49,706	6.7	4.3	6.5	4.1
2020	Q2	45,493	6.6	4.6	6.3	4.4

**PROBATE - ALL**

Year	Quarter	Grants issued	Mean weeks	Median weeks	Mean weeks	Median weeks
2020	Q3	60,225	6.7	4.9	6.0	4.4
2020	Q4	54,476	7.2	5.3	6.2	4.9

**PROBATE - DIGITAL**

Grants issued	Application submission to grant issue		Document receipt to grant issue <sup>4</sup>	
	Mean weeks	Median weeks	Mean weeks	Median weeks
:	:	:	:	:
7,166	9.4	7.6	9.0	7.1
11,060	10.2	9.0	9.2	8.3
10,784	7.1	4.9	6.0	3.7
10,955	6.1	3.7	4.7	2.1
21,591	6.4	4.4	4.3	2.6
21,875	6.6	3.1	4.2	0.3

**PROBATE - PAPER**

Grants issued	Application submission to grant issue		Document receipt to grant issue <sup>4</sup>	
	Mean weeks	Median weeks	Mean weeks	Median weeks
:	:	:	:	:
46,237	9.6	8.1	9.6	8.1
43,329	7.2	4.7	7.2	4.7
38,922	6.6	4.1	6.6	4.1
34,538	6.8	4.7	6.8	4.7
38,634	6.9	5.1	6.9	5.1
32,601	7.6	6.3	7.6	6.3

Source: HMCTS Core Case Data

*Notes:*

*1) HMCTS Core Case Data came into effect at the end of March 2019, following a transition between data systems recording information regarding the Probate Service.*

*2) The average timeliness figures are produced by calculating the time from application/document receipt (which may be from an earlier period) to the grant issued made in that period. Currently grants being issued on the same day as the application submission/document receipt are being calculated as 0 days. This is being reviewed as to whether it is an accurate reflection of workload and may be adjusted in future..*

*3) Some averages presented here may be based on a small number of grants. Where this occurs, any conclusion drawn from these will be limited..*

*4) Document receipt occurs after payment has been made and all accompanying paperwork has been received by HMCTS.*

*5) Due to quality issues in the transition between data systems, the breakdown by type of grant has not been published for Q2 2019.*

*6) A probate application can be stopped for several reasons: a caveat can be entered when there's a dispute about either who can apply for probate or issues with a will or proposed will, or if an error is identified and a request for further information is made.*

Despite the unprecedented challenges faced by the probate service during the Covid 19 pandemic, the average waiting for a grant of probate following receipt of the documents required has been maintained at between four to six weeks.

More recent management information published by HMCTS (which does not go through the same level of quality assurance and analysis as the Family Court Statistics Quarterly) provides waiting time information up to March 2021. This shows that the waiting time on digital grant of probate applications, which are not stopped due to errors or missing documentation, has been below one week since September 2020. Similarly paper cases, not stopped, took less than three weeks on average in March 2021 compared to five weeks in March 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/hmcts-management-information-march-2021>

■ **Solicitors: North East**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

**[11481]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to encourage solicitors to practice in the North East of England.

**Chris Philp:**

Under the framework established by the Legal Services Act 2007, the legal profession in England and Wales, and the bodies that regulate it, are independent from government. We continue to ensure that legal aid advice remains accessible to

those who need it, and the Legal Aid Agency keeps market capacity under continual review to ensure adequate provision across England and Wales.

## SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

### ■ Elections

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[12347\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what steps the Electoral Commission is taking to ensure that the guidance and standards it produces are clear and accessible to voters, candidates, and others involved in the electoral process.

**Christian Matheson:**

The Electoral Commission provides expert advice and guidance to help electoral administrators, political parties and campaigners, and candidates and agents to understand and comply with electoral law.

Its guidance is developed in consultation with the electoral community, and is informed by ongoing discussions with electoral administrators and parties and campaigners, including through the Political Parties Panels. The Commission also gathers feedback from stakeholders following elections, to inform its approach to future polls.

The Commission's guidance is published on its website, which has been subject to user-testing to ensure accessibility and recently redesigned to make finding information easier.

The Commission also provides information to voters to enable them to participate in the democratic process with confidence, including through public awareness campaigns. These are tested with members of the public and third-party organisations to ensure they work effectively for audiences before they are launched.

### ■ Electoral Commission: Parliamentary Scrutiny

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[12348\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what assessment the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission has made of the adequacy of parliamentary scrutiny of the Electoral Commission.

**Christian Matheson:**

The Electoral Commission is directly accountable to the UK's parliaments, and scrutiny of its work is an essential part of giving assurance to parliamentarians and to the public about how it undertakes its duties.

It reports to the UK Parliament through the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, which has a statutory duty to review the Commission's financial estimates and plans, and oversees the appointments of Electoral Commissioners.

Parliamentary select committees, most notably the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, also play an important role in scrutinising the work of the Commission.

The Commission is also accountable to the Scottish Parliament through the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, and the Senedd through the Llywydd's Committee.

## ■ Electoral Systems

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[12346\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what steps the Electoral Commission is taking to maintain public trust and confidence in the electoral system.

**Christian Matheson:**

The interests of the public, and particularly their trust and confidence in the democratic process, are central to the work of the Commission.

It supports electoral administrators to deliver high quality electoral registration and administration services to voters, and by providing detailed guidance to ensure they can undertake their responsibilities. It also provides direct information to voters - such as on voter registration and on preventing voter fraud - to support them in participating with confidence in the democratic process.

It oversees the regulation of political finance and compliance with Parliament's rules. This includes; supporting parties and campaigners to understand and comply with the rules; and taking proportionate enforcement action where breaches occur; and providing voters with transparency over the money spent and received by campaigners and parties.

The Commission's research shows that there are high levels of public confidence that elections in the UK are well-run.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Airports: Motor Vehicles

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[7839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of reduced airline passenger numbers during the covid-19 outbreak on airport-based vehicle rental businesses (a) between March 2020 until May 2021 and (b) over the next six months.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[7840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to support airport-based vehicle rental businesses over the next six months.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances aviation and associated business face as a result of Covid-19. Firms, across the economy, that are experiencing difficulties have been able to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor. This includes support through loan guarantees, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The extension of Government-backed loans and furlough payments announced at the Budget build on the support package available and will help ensure this vital and vibrant part of the UK economy is ready to bounce back in the wake of the pandemic.

We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

**■ Buses: Finance****Dan Jarvis:**[\[11556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of making specific financial support available for coach operators during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Coach operators are able to access a range of financial support measures available to UK businesses.

In April, the Government granted an additional £425 million to local authorities in England through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund. ARG funding is aimed at supporting businesses which are experiencing a severe impact on their business due to public health restrictions. While this funding is allocated at the discretion of local authorities, the Government has issued guidance to councils encouraging them to consider tour operators among the businesses eligible for support.

The Government has also launched a Recovery Loan Scheme, which ensures that businesses of any size can continue to access loans and other kinds of finance up to £10 million per business.

As we progress safely through the steps of the Roadmap, the Government will continue to engage with coach operators and with tourism stakeholders to assess how it can support the coach sector's recovery in the long-term.

**■ Cycling: Epilepsy****Steve McCabe:**[\[11468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on people with epilepsy of flashing lights on pedal cycles.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Published research identifies that flashing lights at certain intensities have the potential to trigger seizures in those who suffer from photosensitive epilepsy. It also



reports the likelihood of such effects to be low and the frequency range most likely to cause such a response is 5-30 flashes per second (5-30Hz).

As such, the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 (as amended) permit flashing bicycle lamps only if they have a frequency of no greater than 4 Hz, and not so bright as to cause undue dazzle or discomfort to other road users.

### ■ Dartford-Thurrock Crossing: Tolls

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[7745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much revenue was received in tolls for travelling over the Dartford Crossing in each of the last five years.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Dartford Crossing receives zero income from tolls. Tolls have not been in operation since 2003 when the debts associated with the construction of the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge and the tunnels were fully discharged. A Road User Charge was introduced in 2003 to manage high demand for the crossing.

Revenue from the Road User Charge for the last five years is set out below:

<a href="#">2019/2020</a>	£135,619,000
<a href="#">2018/2019</a>	£120,625,000
<a href="#">2017/2018</a>	£115,427,000
<a href="#">2016/2017</a>	£111,801,000
<a href="#">2015/2016</a>	£107,983,000

The crossing's full revenue is higher for each year owing to additional income from enforcement, abnormal load fees and other rental income. Full accounts are published each year and can be accessed in the above table.

### ■ Department for Transport: Recruitment

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[11619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people his Department has employed who previously worked at Heathrow Airport from 2011 to 2021.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department and its Executive Agencies do not store information in an individual's employee records regarding their former employer(s).

### ■ Department for Transport: Resignations

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[11618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many employees have left his Department to work at Heathrow Airport in each of the last three years.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department and its Executive Agencies do not store information in employee records regarding what organisations staff join upon leaving the Department.

**■ Driving Tests: Stirling****Alyn Smith:**[\[8735\]](#)

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

**Rachel Maclean:**

As of 24 May 2021, the next available date to take a practical driving test in Stirling is:

(a) 6 weeks for car

(b) 10.5 weeks for HGV (nearest centres: Livingston - 10 weeks, Perth - 11 weeks, Glasgow - 10 weeks)

(c) 6 weeks for motorcycle (nearest centres: Glasgow Shieldhall module one - 11 weeks / module two - 1 week, Edinburgh Musselburgh module one - 1 week, module two - 1 week, Livingston module two only - 1 week)

(d) 13 weeks for tractor

**■ East Coast Railway Line****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[7950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to upgrade the East Coast Main Line between Edinburgh and Newcastle.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The current East Coast Main Line Enhancements Programme will already improve services between Edinburgh, Newcastle and south towards London, with more seats and regular faster trains in a new timetable expected to operate from May 2022. The Department is working closely with stakeholders to explore opportunities to further improve performance on the East Coast Main Line, and is currently awaiting the outputs of Network Rail's analysis of capacity constraints on the route between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

In addition, the Union Connectivity Review, led by Sir Peter Hendy and expected to report in the summer, will make recommendations on how connectivity can be improved between Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[7951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Government and (b) Transport Scotland on improvements on the East Coast Main Line.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The East Coast Main Line Enhancements Programme and roll-out of Azuma trains will improve services between Edinburgh, Newcastle and south towards London, with more seats and regular faster trains in a new timetable expected to operate from May 2022. Officials have been in regular contact with Transport Scotland to ensure that operators under contract to the Department for Transport can support intermediate connections, for example to Scotland's new station at Reston, until such time as Transport Scotland is able to provide the services.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[8674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to upgrade the East Coast Main Line between York and Edinburgh.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

A new timetable is expected to operate on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) from May 2022, which will offer more seats, and faster services. The Department has also secured funding to design a package of upgrades at Darlington Station.

Furthermore, we are currently awaiting the outputs of Network Rail's analysis of constraints on the ECML between Newcastle and Edinburgh, as well as the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North, which will inform our planning for the longer-term future of the route.

**■ Electric Scooters****Sir David Evennett:**[\[7744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps are being taken to tackle inappropriate use of e-scooters.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Enforcement of offences relating to unlawful use of e-scooters is an operational matter for individual Chief Officers of police in conjunction with local policing plans. They decide what offences may be appropriate in individual cases, taking into account the circumstances. A range of offences may apply, including those relating to speeding and dangerous driving, drink and drug driving, as well as insurance and licensing. Users can be fined up to £300, have 6 points put on their driving licence, and the e-scooter can be impounded.

**■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies****Stephen Crabb:**[\[7767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the shortage of HGV drivers in the UK.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The labour shortages in the sector are longstanding. Industry estimates the shortage of HGV drivers to be between 60,000 - 76,000.

## ■ Motorways: Accidents

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[11706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on casualty (a) removal from crash scenes and (b) prospects of survival, of the inability of emergency service vehicles to reach serious accident locations on smart motorways, following the conversion of their hard shoulder into an extra lane; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Throughout the design and development of All Lane Running (ALR) motorways, there has been extensive consultation with the emergency services to ensure that they have safe and effective operating procedures. Highways England has signed a national agreement with the Police, Fire and Ambulance services, setting out the principles of operating ALR motorways and responding to incidents, along with regional operating agreements to cover individual schemes.

Highways England undertakes regular stakeholder engagement events across all regions, which the emergency services attend. Highways England's regional teams routinely engage with key stakeholders, including police forces and other emergency services. In light of its extensive engagement with the emergency services, Highways England has not made a specific assessment of the effect on casualties of the ability of emergency service vehicles to reach the scene of serious incident locations on ALR motorways. Highways England is not aware of this issue being one which is consistently raised through its various forums.

## ■ Network Rail: Land

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[8666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May to Question 4639, which (a) sites the housing units relate to and (b) local authority areas the sites are located in.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The information is attached and will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

The data has been updated since the previous response to Question 4639 and so the total amount of units has increased by 39.

**Attachments:**

1. NR - Housing units - site Local Authority areas [Network Rail - Housing units - site Local Authority areas.xlsx]

## ■ Public Transport: Disability and Older People

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[10655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what long term investment he is making in community transport infrastructure to support the mobility of elderly and disabled people across the West Midlands.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government understands that community transport operators provide vital services particularly for older and disabled people, linking them with their communities, helping take them to shops, work, school, and medical appointments.

Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) is paid annually to operators of community transport services (as well as eligible bus services), to recover fuel costs. Community Transport operators receive approximately £2.3 million BSOG funding per year to support these vital services.

Since January 2014, around £43 million of BSOG is also paid annually to local authorities to support socially necessary bus services that are not commercially viable. In 2020 – 2021, Transport for West Midlands received £ 1,792,259 and Coventry City Council received £58,686 of BSOG funding.

We also continue to make investment in step-free access to railway stations through our Access for All programme across the country, with £350 million provided for this between 2019 and 2024. In the West Midlands, this includes providing an accessible route at Smethwick Rolfe Street station and tactile safety strips on platforms at Wolverhampton.

**■ Railways: Contracts****Jim McMahon:**[\[11610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of additional staff required to administer a national system of concessionary rail contracts.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Transformation on the scale set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail cannot happen overnight. Government is setting up a Rail Transformation Programme within the Department for Transport and working with the rail sector to ensure a common understanding of the vision, establish the phases of delivery, and work collectively with the sector to design and implement this major project.

We expect to launch initial competitions for Passenger Service Contracts by the time the emergency recovery agreements end in 2022. Further detail will be announced in due course.

**Jim McMahon:**[\[11611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what contractual relationships his Department has entered into with (a) KPMG, (b) EY and (c) other external consultants to develop the proposals in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail published 20 May 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

To develop proposals in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the Department was supported by the following consultancies:

Ashurst; PWC; Rail Delivery Group; Eversheds Sutherland; Britain Thinks; Steer Davies Gleave; Jacobs; and Deloitte.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is his Department's policy to publish new National Rail Contracts.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

It is the Department's policy to publish redacted versions of the National Rail Contracts.

#### ■ **Railways: Electrification**

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[11501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding from the public purse the Government has committed for the electrification of rail transport in England since the Spending Review 2020 .

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Spending Review in 2020 provided significant funding to continue enhancing the rail network until the end of Control Period 6 (2019-2024), including investing in electrification schemes.

The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, an update of which is due to be published shortly, will show the progress of each enhancement project, including electrification enhancements.

#### ■ **Railways: Livestock**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[7906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 2401, how many incursions by livestock onto the rail network have occurred in each of the last five years; and how many of those incursions resulted in investigations by Network Rail.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

In the last five years there have been 4,431 incidents on Network Rail infrastructure involving livestock. These can be broken by year into the following:

2016-17 – 965 incidents

2017-18 – 941 incidents

2018-19 – 1,162 incidents

2019-20 – 684 incidents

2020-21 – 679 incidents

Network Rail undertakes investigations of all incidents of livestock incursions as a matter of course.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[8710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 2401 on Railways: Livestock, what estimate he has made of the cost to Network Rail of preventing livestock incursions onto the rail network in each of the last 5 years.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Network Rail do not hold specific data on the costs of preventing livestock intrusions onto the network. The costs have not been estimated in this manner because issues such as fencing to prevent incursion will generally not be related specifically to livestock, but to preventing incursion onto the rail network more widely. The funding for activities to safeguard the railway is provided for out of the maintenance and renewals budgets within each of Network Rail's regions.

## ■ Railways: Procurement

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[11613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the timeline for procurement by Great British Railways.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

We will replace franchising with a more commercially sustainable model. New Passenger Service Contracts will ensure that private sector innovation is targeted where it is most needed, with private sector operators strongly incentivised to run high quality punctual services, manage costs and attract more passengers.

Transformation on this scale cannot happen overnight. Government is setting up a Rail Transformation Programme within the Department for Transport and working with the rail sector to ensure a common understanding of the vision, establish the phases of delivery, and work collectively with the sector to design and implement this major project.

An announcement on next steps will be made in due course.

## ■ Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[10725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the response to the consultation on amending the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation will be published.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We are currently analysing responses to the consultation "Amending the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) to increase carbon savings on land, air and at sea", which closed at the end of April. It is the Department's plan to publish a Government Response in the summer.

## ■ Road Traffic Control: Fines

**John Spellar:**

[\[7729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment has he made of the proportionality of the level of fines issued to people driving in low traffic neighbourhoods.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has not made any such assessment. 'Low-traffic neighbourhoods' have been around for many years but have only recently become known by this name. It describes a collection of measures designed to remove rat-running traffic from streets. The key feature is generally a road closure, which prevents through motor traffic from accessing the road but permits cycling and walking. Access is maintained for residents and their visitors and for essential services.

Closures may be implemented using existing standard traffic management measures such as signed access restrictions to through motor traffic. These are enforceable in the same way and with the same penalties as when used on any other part of the road network.

## ■ Roads: Capital Investment

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[8756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the Road Investment Strategy pipeline 3 projects; and whether he plans projects additional to the 32 projects already outlined.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Of the 32 "RIS3 Pipeline" projects listed in the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2), 31 are each at a different stage of development by Highways England. We expect to receive Highways England's advice on the options for each project over the next two years, helping to inform our investment decisions for the third Road Investment Strategy that will cover the Road Period starting in 2025. Only those projects that are affordable, deliverable and secure strategic objectives will be funded for construction.

The remaining Pipeline project listed in RIS2, the A21 Safety Package, has been accelerated for delivery in the current Road Period (2020-25). Candidates for further Pipeline projects will be considered on their merits as they emerge, taking account of resources available for their development.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Procurement

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[11609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the (a) value for money for the public purse of rolling stock procured since 2015 and (b) trajectory of leasing costs over the 30 to 35-year asset life of those trains.



**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Rolling stock is procured by the private sector to meet the needs of train operators as part of their bids in respect of the former franchise process and value-for-money will have been taken into account overall.

The costs of leasing rolling stock over its life is a matter for the owners and will take into account potential factors such as market competition, maintenance, refurbishment and other such costs. All factors will be considered when awarding contracts to make sure that the value-for-money is achieved for the taxpayer.

**Speed Limits: Urban Areas****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[11603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals for a default 20mph motor vehicle speed limit for urban areas in the UK.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department published a comprehensive three-year evaluation of the effect of 20mph signed-only limits on 22 November 2018.

The research substantially strengthens the evidence base on perceptions, speeds and early outcomes associated with 20mph speed limits, and is the only major UK study to consider multiple case study areas and provide a national view.

The headline findings were:

- 20mph limits are supported by the majority of residents and drivers
- There has been a small reduction in median speed (less than 1mph).
- Vehicles travelling at higher speeds before the introduction of the 20mph limit have reduced their speed more than those already travelling at lower speeds.
- There is insufficient evidence to conclude that there has been a significant change in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph limits in residential areas.
- In one city centre case study there has been a significant reduction in collisions and casualties.

**Train Operating Companies: Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements****Jim McMahon:**[\[11612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Written Statement of 21 September 2020, HCWS460 on Rail update, if he will publish the tougher performance targets for operators under the Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMA) allow the Department to assess operator performance through either a qualitative based scorecard assessment or through the use of quantified targets.

All ERMA operators are currently assessed using a scorecard assessment. The scorecard criteria for the ERMA is more exacting than the EMA it replaces setting a higher bar for the level of performance an operator must achieve to earn a management fee. The scorecard criteria has already been published on the .gov.uk website.

The Department is currently evaluating the case for transitioning the remaining ERMA operators onto quantitative based targets from September of this year.

## ■ **Trains: Carbon Emissions**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[11503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimates he has made of the levels of emissions generated from trains travelling between Glasgow and London using (a) the aggregate national rail conversion factor and (b) a line specific estimate of emissions from electric trains in terms of indicative greenhouse gas emissions expressed as kg CO<sub>2</sub>e for a single passenger.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department has recently published its first estimates of indicative GHG emissions produced for each mile travelled by different modes of transport as part of its new Transport and Environment Statistics release.

When considering the approach used to derive those statistics, (a) estimated indicative emissions for trains travelling between Glasgow and London are 23 KgCO<sub>2</sub>e per passenger for direct emissions, or 28 KgCO<sub>2</sub>e per passenger including indirect emissions (from fuel extraction and delivery), using the aggregate national rail conversion factor for 2020. However, (b) there is no equivalent conversion factor for electric trains, therefore we are unable to estimate per-passenger emissions for this or any specific electric-only journey.

## ■ **Transport: Carbon Emissions**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[11502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will include whole life carbon data across transport modes in his Department's transport and environment statistics as recommended in the HM Treasury's Infrastructure Carbon Review, published in November 2013.

**Rachel Maclean:**

DfT's Transport and Environment statistics publication presents new statistics on indicative GHG emissions produced for each mile travelled by different modes of transport, covering both direct and indirect emissions associated with a given journey.

The scope of emissions included in this release is set by the separately published carbon emissions conversion factors produced by BEIS as part of the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, which is a key input to this analysis. This ensures these figures are comparable with other greenhouse gas emissions statistics. It is not possible to calculate whole life carbon emissions from this source.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[8704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle carbon emissions from transport in the South East.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan, due to be published shortly, will set out a holistic and cross-modal approach to decarbonising the entire transport system, including in the South East. We recognise that different decarbonisation solutions will be required and will work best in different places across the UK, which is why place-based solutions is one of the six strategic priorities for the plan.

■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[11718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the timetable for the next comprehensive review of countries under the covid-19 traffic light system for international travel.

**Robert Courts:**

The allocation of countries to the traffic light system will be reviewed every three weeks, unless concerning evidence means we need to act faster to protect public health.

The next review will take place in the week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[11555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the adequacy of financial support available to travel companies during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the international travel sector because of Covid-19. Firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor.

The Department for Transport works closely with HM Treasury on matters related to support for the transport sector. We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review. Ongoing engagement with the sector is critical for the Government to be prepared and able to react in a timely manner.

**TREASURY****■ Children: Disability****Dan Carden:**[\[11643\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on allocating funding to specific covid-19 recovery policies for disabled children and young people.

**Steve Barclay:**

HM Treasury Ministers regularly meet with other government departments and a range of stakeholders, which includes discussions around disabled children and young people, and COVID-19 recovery.

As part of plans to boost education recovery, the government is investing £1.7 billion in academic years 20-21 and 21-22. This includes a £650 million catch up premium in 20-21, and £302 million one-off recovery premium in 21-22. Schools can prioritise this funding to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) where appropriate.

The government is providing a further £1.4 billion over the next three academic years for education recovery, including £1 billion to support up to six million, 15-hour tutoring courses for disadvantaged school children.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[11601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing VAT from the price of covid-19 PCR tests.

**Jesse Norman:**

VAT is a broad-based tax on consumption and the standard rate of 20 per cent normally applies to most goods and services, including PCR tests. Medical testing, where it is administered by registered health professionals, is exempt from VAT. The Government also continues to offer free COVID-19 testing for those with COVID-19 symptoms.

The Government recognises that the cost of PCR tests can be high, which is why it is working with the travel industry and private testing providers to see how costs can be further reduced for the British public while ensuring that travel is as safe as possible.

**■ Cryptocurrencies****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[10689\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to protect (a) long-term retail and (b) amateur investors in crypto-currencies; and what steps his Department plans to take in the event of significant or long-term falls in market values of the different types of (i) current and (ii) future cryptocurrencies.

**John Glen:**

The Government established a Cryptoassets Taskforce in 2018, consisting of HM Treasury, the Bank of England, and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Taskforce's objectives include exploring the risks and opportunities of cryptoassets, the potential benefits and challenges of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) in financial services; as well as assessing what, if any, regulation is required in response.

HM Treasury and UK authorities have taken a series of actions to mitigate risks to retail investors, stability, and market integrity, as well as preventing the use of cryptoassets in illicit activity.

Last year, the Government issued a consultation on a proposal to bring certain cryptoassets, including Bitcoin, into the scope of financial promotions regulation. This would ensure that relevant cryptoasset promotions are held to the same high standards for fairness, clarity, and accuracy that pertain in the financial services industry. The Government will be publishing its response in due course.

To further protect consumers, the FCA has banned the sale of cryptoasset derivatives to retail consumers, and recently issued a warning stating that consumers who invest in cryptoassets should be prepared to lose their money. Alongside this, the Government launched a new anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime for cryptoassets in 2020.

The Government launched a consultation on its regulatory approach to cryptoassets and stablecoins on 7 January. This set out the Government's position that new innovations in the sector could deliver substantial benefits, but also present new challenges and risks. This consultation has now closed.

The Government is processing responses and will outline next steps in due course. Any steps taken in light of this consultation will aim to balance the potential risk to consumers with the ambition to foster competition and innovation in the sector.

The Government continues to actively monitor emerging risks as this market continues to mature and stands ready to take further regulatory action if required.

**■ Dormant Assets Scheme****John McDonnell:****[10147]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimates his Department has made of the revenue impact of expanding the scope of dormant assets scheme in the Dormant Assets Bill.

**John Glen:**

HM Treasury and the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport have worked extensively with industry stakeholders to estimate the potential impact of expanding the Dormant Assets Scheme. According to industry estimates, this expansion could result in a further £1.7bn of dormant assets being transferred into the Scheme. After a portion is reserved for any future reclaims, the Government estimates £880m will

be available for distribution to initiatives across the UK. The Government's [consultation response](#), "Government response to the consultation on expanding the Dormant Assets Scheme" has further detail on the impact of Scheme expansion.

### ■ English Language: Education

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[11605\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of granting English language schools business rates relief.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has provided enhanced support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance on eligibility for the relief, which is targeted at premises that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; for assembly and leisure; or as hotels, guest and boarding premises, and self-catering accommodation.

### ■ Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation

**David Warburton:** [\[11607\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the detailed calculations, including intermediary steps, used in determining payments under the Equitable Life Payment Scheme.

**David Warburton:** [\[11608\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take in 2021 to help people affected by the Equitable Life scandal.

**John Glen:**

The methodology for calculating payments to Equitable Life policyholders was published in 2011 and can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-design](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-design).

There are no plans to reopen the Payment Scheme or review the £1.5 billion funding allocation previously made to it. The Equitable Life Payment Scheme closed to claims in 2015 and further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after closure is available at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme).

### ■ Individual Savings Accounts

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[10660\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessments of the potential merits of increasing the Lifetime ISA threshold for people living in London.

**John Glen:**

The Lifetime ISA aims to provide the opportunity for first-time buyers to enter the market and offers a generous government bonus of 25% on up to £4,000 of savings each year to support that aim.

The Government believes that the 25% bonus must be focused on those that need it most in order to ensure sustainable public finances. The Government continues to consider a property price cap of £450,000 appropriate to support the majority of first-time buyers across the UK. Nonetheless, the Government keeps all aspects of savings policy under review.

**■ Non-domestic Rates: Tax Allowances****Peter Aldous:**[\[7814\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending Business Rates Relief to the end of the 2021-22 financial year.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Budget announced a three-month extension to the business rates holiday for eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors that was provided at Budget 2020. This means over 350,000 properties will pay no business rates for three months this year.

From 1 July 2021, 66% relief will be available subject to a cash cap that depends on whether businesses were required to close or were able to open on 5 January 2021. This additional relief takes the total value of support in 2021-22 to £6 billion and means the vast majority of businesses will on average receive 75% relief across the year.

**■ Revenue and Customs: Scotland****Alison Thewliss:**[\[11579\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HMRC employees were located in Scotland (a) in March 2011 and (b) at the most recent date on which his Department has collated that information.

**Jesse Norman:**

Based on the HMRC organisational structure for March 2011 and May 2021, the numbers of employees located in Scotland were:

Headcount, March 2011 = 9,918

Headcount, May 2021 = 7,817

**■ Royal Bank of Scotland: Small Businesses****Alyn Smith:**[\[10648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to establish an independent quality assurance review of RBS Global Restructuring Group's treatment of SMEs.

**John Glen:**

It would be inappropriate for the Government to comment on or intervene in the independent redress process overseen by Sir William Blackburne.

The Government believes that the financial services industry has changed significantly since the challenging period leading up to and following the financial crisis. For example, all of the major SME lenders have signed up to the Standards of Lending Practice (SLP), which are overseen by the independent Lending Standards Board and contain clear guidance on best practice.

The Government has always been clear that the fact that there were areas of widespread inappropriate treatment of firms by RBS GRG is unacceptable. RBS has rightly apologised for these mistakes and as stated above, has set up a scheme to compensate victims. The redress scheme has paid out over £130 million so far and the Government continues to monitor how much redress is being paid out.

There are currently no plans to undertake a review of RBS Global Restructuring Group's treatment of SMEs.

**■ Sixth Form Colleges: VAT****Gareth Thomas:**[\[7726\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will exempt Catholic sixth form colleges from paying VAT; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under the current VAT rules, the supply of education by an eligible body, including sixth form colleges, without a charge is outside the scope of VAT. Where a charge is applied, it is exempt from VAT. In either case, this means that no VAT is charged on these services. The Government has no plans to review these provisions.

**■ Taxation: British Overseas Territories****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[11636\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with British Overseas Territories on a minimum global tax rate.

**Jesse Norman:**

The UK's Overseas Territories are fiscally autonomous jurisdictions with their own democratically elected governments responsible for their fiscal matters.

Many of them are members of the OECD Inclusive Framework in their own right, which is the official forum for developing the framework of rules for a global minimum corporation tax; Pillar Two of the two-pillar package being developed by the OECD to address the tax challenges of digitisation.

The UK Government's fundamental responsibility and objective is to ensure the security and good governance of the Territories and their peoples; the Government continues to uphold that responsibility and remains engaged with the Territories on that basis.



## ■ Unpaid Taxes: Coronavirus

**Sarah Olney:** [\[11616\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to cancel the tax debt of people who have become unemployed as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Sarah Olney:** [\[11617\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has conducted a cost-benefit analysis of enforcing tax debt on people who have become unemployed as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has put in place very substantial support for taxpayers during this extraordinary time of uncertainty, including the introduction of a range of measures to help businesses and individuals to manage their tax liabilities.

This has included support for those in Self-Assessment, where taxpayers were given the option of deferring their July 2020 Payment on Account until January 2021 to give immediate support to businesses and individuals by keeping cash at their disposal during this extraordinary period of uncertainty.

In addition, HMRC scaled up their Time to Pay service where businesses or individuals can look to agree tailored plans to defer certain tax payments and repay them over a longer period of time.

HMRC also waived late filing penalties for Income Tax Self-Assessment (ITSA) returns due on 31 January 2021 for those who filed online by 28 February 2021, and announced that ITSA taxpayers would not be charged the 5% late payment penalty usually due on 3 March if they paid their tax or set up a payment plan by 1 April 2021.

## ■ VAT: Tax Rates and Bands

**Peter Aldous:** [\[7813\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the reduction in VAT to 5 per cent for tourism to amusement arcades.

**Jesse Norman:**

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July to support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and protect 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. This relief already comes at a significant cost of over £7 billion to the Exchequer and, while the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to extend the scope of the reduced rate.

The Government has introduced a wider package of support worth billions to help businesses through the coronavirus period, which includes extensions to the furlough scheme; extensions to the COVID-19 loan schemes; grant support; a business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure business properties; mortgage holidays; enhanced Time to Pay for taxes; and VAT deferrals.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Carer's Allowance

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[10503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the carers' allowance.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

This Government continues to protect the value of benefits paid to carers whilst also spending record amounts in real terms.

The level of Carer's Allowance is protected by uprating it each April in line with inflation as measured by the CPI for the previous September. The purpose of benefit uprating is to ensure that the value of benefits stays in line with the general level of prices. From April 2021, the Carer's Allowance payment was increased to £67.60. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.60 a week, providing an additional £700 a year for carers.

Between 2021/22 and 2025/26 real terms expenditure on Carer's Allowance is forecast to increase by nearly a third (around £0.8 billion). By 2025/26, the Government is forecast to spend just over £4bn a year on Carer's Allowance.

As well as Carer's Allowance, carers have access to the full range of social security benefits. For example, carers on Universal Credit can receive around an additional £1,950 a year through the Carer Element. Carers receiving Universal Credit may also benefit from the temporary £20 a week increase in the Universal Credit standard allowance. Due to the temporary Covid-19 uplift, around 300,000 carer households receiving Universal Credit benefitted from an additional £1,040 during the 20/21 financial year. So this Government has chosen to focus extra support on those carers who need it most.

### ■ Children: Poverty

**Feryal Clark:** [\[11694\]](#)

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

**Will Quince:**

This Government is wholly committed to tackling poverty. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to support the most vulnerable including through spending an additional £7.4billion to strengthen the welfare system, taking our total expenditure on welfare support for people of working age to an estimated £112 billion in 2020/21. Additionally, in December 2020 we introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme, providing funding to Local Authorities in England to enable them to support people with food and essential utility bills during the coldest months, now the Covid Local Support Grant, with a total investment of £269m.

National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication. Data for Kingston upon Hull North is unavailable due to insufficient sample size.

Latest statistics for the levels of children who are in low income in England, covering 2019/20, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>, “children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2019-20-tables” in table 4.16ts (relative low income, before and after housing costs) and in table 4.22ts (absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

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

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

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

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

**Feryal Clark:**

**[11695]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the £20 uplift in universal credit on levels of child poverty in (a) England and (b) Enfield North.

**Will Quince:**

No assessment has been made.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

We introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme providing funding to Local Authorities in England to help the most vulnerable children and families stay warm and well fed during the coldest months, now the Covid Local Support Grant, with a total investment of £269m.

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

**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Vacancies****David Linden:**[\[10597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many civil service jobs her Department and its agencies had in Scotland in (a) March 2011 and (b) the most recent period for which data are available.

**Guy Opperman:**

As at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the Department had 8,841 employees based in Scotland. Figures for March 2011 are not available because the data retention policy for reporting of employee information at this level is for seven years.

**■ Employment Schemes: Disability****Kirsten Oswald:**[\[10438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that companies that are signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme are supporting their disabled employees.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Employers that have signed up to the Disability Confident (DC) scheme are provided with the knowledge, skills and free resources they need to attract, recruit, retain and develop disabled people in the workplace. The scheme is designed as a learning journey with all employers starting at Level 1 and encouraged to progress through the scheme to Levels 2 and 3. No employer is too small or new to start the journey and even the most experienced employer will still find new techniques and best practice that can help better support their employees. For example, employers signing up to the scheme are committing to 'Ensure their recruitment process is inclusive and accessible' and 'Supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long term health condition, enabling them to stay in work'.

Throughout the pandemic, we have ensured that employers have received timely and appropriate support through the delivery of a series of practical national webinars, covering a range of employer hot topics, ranging from: New Ways of Working, Access to Work, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Virtual Hiring and Autism and Neurodiversity. We have also delivered a number of employer events, focusing on the support available to employees. In addition, all Disability Confident employers receive regular Disability Confident newsletters and other communications to support them and their employees. There are currently over 20,000 employers signed up to the Disability Confident scheme, covering over 11million employees.

**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[10439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many companies are signed up to the Disability Confident scheme; and what estimate she has made of the impact that scheme has had on the number of disabled people in employment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

There are currently over 20,000 employers signed up to the Disability Confident scheme, covering over 11m employees.

In November 2018, we published the results of survey research which explored the effect that signing up to the Disability Confident scheme had on recruitment and retention attitudes towards disabled people. The researchers interviewed employers of all sizes, ranging from very small organisations with low levels of staff turnover to large companies employing thousands, and a key finding was that signing up to Disability Confident resulted in half (49%) of employers interviewed taking on at least one disabled member of staff, rising to 66% amongst larger firms. The full report may be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-survey-of-participating-employers>.

We will be conducting further research this year, to establish the value added by Disability Confident and explore the behaviours of employers and their recruitment and retention practices. Disability Confident employers have also offered over 60,000 specific work opportunities, which include: work experience, work trials, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, job shadowing, student placements, Sector Based Work Academy Placements as well as job vacancies.

The Government is committed to a goal of seeing a million more disabled people in work in the decade to 2027 and reducing the disability employment gap. In the first three years of the goal (between 2017 and 2020), the number of disabled people in employment increased by 800,000<sup>1</sup>. Between 2014 and 2020 the disability employment gap also reduced by 5.2 percentage points.

*<sup>1</sup>The underlying data behind this figure is currently under review by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and is therefore subject to change.*

**■ Employment: Coronavirus****Dr Julian Lewis:****[11457]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which principal factors her Department has identified as causing the shortage of (a) UK and (b) EU workers for reopening UK businesses, with particular reference to the impact of (i) the furlough scheme and (ii) travel restrictions; what steps she is taking to (A) vary or (B) bring to an end arrangements which are restricting the availability of workers for reopening businesses; and if she will publish a timetable for taking those steps.

**Mims Davies:**

Official data from the independent Office for National Statistics shows that the number of advertised vacancies across the UK economy was 657,000 in February to April 2021 – 154,000 (19%) below their pre-COVID-19 level.

Our Plan for Jobs is an ambitious programme of job creation and support to help people of all ages move into work or gain the skills that will open up job opportunities.

**■ Employment: Disability****Kirsten Oswald:**[\[10436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support disabled employees during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on disabled people using existing and new data sources. The Department has had discussions with charities, disabled people's organizations' and individuals to understand the range of experiences disabled people have had during the pandemic and to identify the support needed.

DWP offers financial support for people who are affected by the pandemic, or who need employment-related support in general through Universal Credit, New Style ESA or Pension Credit, all of which can be applied for online. Employer led support is available through Statutory Sick Pay. In addition, people with a condition arising from exposure to the Covid-19 virus are able to access PIP in the same way as other people with long-term health conditions or disabilities

A range of DWP initiatives are supporting disabled people to stay in and enter work. These include the Work and Health Programme, one-to-one support and training through the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have provided specialist employment support remotely and made programmes easier to access.

Government will also shortly publish the National Strategy for Disabled People which will take into account the impacts of the Covid-19 impact on disabled people and focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them most in all aspects of life.

**■ Equal Pay: Disability****Kirsten Oswald:**[\[10440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a statutory requirement on companies to report their disability pay gap.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We want employers to better understand the composition of their workforce and recognise external reporting as a positive step on the journey towards driving a culture of transparency and openness around health at work. In November 2018, we published a voluntary reporting framework, aimed at large employers (with over 250 employees) that recommends that they publicly report on disability employment and mental health and wellbeing. The framework can also be used to support smaller employers who are keen to drive greater transparency in their organisation or

industry. In November 2019, it also became a requirement for new and renewing Disability Confident Leaders to publically report on disability and mental health.

Whilst we recognise the merits of disability reporting, we would not propose to extend this to pay gap reporting due to the risk of dis-incentivising employers from recruiting more disabled people.

Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith is also leading a time-limited independent Commission looking at how DWP, wider Government and employers can best support people to progress out of low pay, especially for those groups more likely to be in persistent low pay. A report will be published shortly. The ONS identified in 2018 that disabled employees were over-represented in lower-skilled and lower paying occupations when compared to their non-disabled counterparts.

## ■ Food Banks

**Thangam Debbonaire:** **[7850]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information she holds on the number of households in (a) in Bristol West constituency and (b) the UK who used a (i) food bank, (ii) food club and (iii) similar organisation for the first time during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Thangam Debbonaire:** **[7852]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to eradicate the need for foodbanks.

### **Will Quince:**

Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation. There is no consistent and accurate measure of food bank usage at a constituency or national level.

We take the issue of food insecurity seriously, which is why we added internationally used food security questions to the Family Resources Survey in 19/20 and published the data in March this year. ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020> ). Food insecurity data from the Family Resources survey for 20/21 is not yet available.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

We introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme providing funding to Local Authorities in England to help the most vulnerable children and families stay warm and well fed during the coldest months. It will now run until June as the Covid Local Support Grant, with a total investment of £269m.

We are investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme which has been expanded to every local authority across England this year. Children eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals will have the option to join a holiday

club programme that provides healthy food and enriching activities during the summer, Christmas and Easter holidays in 2021. We also increased the value of Healthy Start Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 in April.

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

**Owen Thompson:**

**[7876]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government plans to take in response to Trussell Trust's findings on the use of food banks by people who (a) met the Trussell Trust's definition of being destitute and (b) are disabled in its report entitled State of Hunger, published in May 2021.

**Will Quince:**

This Government is wholly committed to tackling poverty. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to support the most vulnerable including through spending an additional £7.4 billion to strengthen the welfare system, taking our total expenditure on welfare support for people of working age to an estimated £111 billion in 2020/21.

We are spending over £57 billion during 2021/22 on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions, including but not limited to new style Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment. Benefits to meet the additional costs of disability were excluded from the benefit freeze which was in place from 2016 to 2020 and during that period were updated in line with prices.

There is clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. The Government recognises the important economic contribution of disabled people in the labour market and in 2017 we set a goal to see one million more disabled people in work by 2027. DWP delivers a range of programmes to support disabled people, to stay in or move into work. These include the Work and Health Programme, Intensive Personalised Employment Support, Access to Work, Disability Confident and initiatives in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services and Individual Placement and Support.

## ■ **Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**

**Chris Stephens:**

**[11587]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of (a) claimants subject to the under-occupancy penalty are in employment and (b) households subject to the under-occupancy penalty contain at least one person in employment.



**Will Quince:**

The information requested is not readily available for Universal Credit, and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Data on households in Housing Benefit impacted by the Removal of Spare Room Subsidy is published and available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk> within the section on "Housing Benefit".

Guidance for users is available at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**Chris Stephens:** [11588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of (a) claimants subject to the under-occupancy penalty are sick or disabled and (b) households subject to the under-occupancy penalty contain at least one person who is sick or disabled.

**Will Quince:**

The information requested is not readily available for part (a) and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Some of the information requested for part (b) is published and available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk> link is external within the sections on "Housing Benefit" and "Households on Universal Credit".

Guidance for users is available at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**Chris Stephens:** [11589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of households subject to the under-occupancy penalty contain at least one child.

**Will Quince:**

The information requested is published and available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk> within the sections on "Housing Benefit" and "Households on Universal Credit".

Guidance for users is available at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**■ Housing Benefit: Supported Housing****Ms Karen Buck:** [11707]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the amount of housing benefit spent on supported exempt accommodation in England in 2020.

**Will Quince:**

Providing the requested information would incur disproportionate costs to the Department.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[11708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of housing benefit claimants who were living in supported exempt accommodation by (a) registered providers and (b) non-registered providers in England in 2020.

**Will Quince:**

Providing the requested information would incur disproportionate costs to the Department.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[11709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of housing benefit claimants living in supported exempt accommodation who were (a) domestic abuse survivors, (b) people with disabilities, (c) care leavers, (d) people with histories of homelessness and (e) people with mental health needs in England in 2020.

**Will Quince:**

The information requested is not held by the Department.

Supported Housing provides a vital service and enables some of the most vulnerable people in the UK to live fulfilling independent lives in their communities.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[11710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many housing benefit claims for people living in supported exempt accommodation in England were made (a) as at 31 March 2021 and (b) in each financial year for the last five years.

**Will Quince:**

Providing the requested information would incur disproportionate costs to the Department.

## ■ **Offices: Coronavirus**

**David Linden:** [\[10595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases of covid-19 have been reported among staff in offices where the Indian variant of that virus is present in the community; and if she will make a statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department collates data of reported positive cases where the member of staff was last in the office in the preceding 72 hours. We do not however, have information to confirm whether any of these cases were VOC B1617.2 (the Delta variant, first identified in India).

All of our sites are COVID secure and we have extensive measures in place to protect staff and customers including social distancing and enhanced cleaning regimes.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Chris Stephens:** [\[11583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to give all applicants the automatic right to have their assessment for sickness or disability benefits recorded; and if she will make a statement.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The option for a claimant to request an Audio Recording of their PIP Telephone Assessment is available with both Assessment Providers and also for Work Capability Assessments undertaken over the telephone.

The Department is currently working with both PIP Assessment Providers to deliver an audio recording service for face to face assessments that removes the requirement for the Claimant to provide the equipment. This will bring the audio recording of PIP face to face assessments in line with the audio recording of telephone assessments. The option of audio recording a face to face assessment is already available for Work Capability Assessments and IIDB assessments where requested in advance by the claimant.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[11596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 812 on Social Security Benefits: Disability and with reference to her predecessor's speech to Scope on 5 March 2019, whether her Department plans to include proposals on reforming the assessment processes for employment support allowance and personal independence payment in its forthcoming Green Paper on Disability Benefits.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The upcoming Green Paper on health and disability will explore how the welfare system can better meet the needs of disabled people and people with health conditions now and in the future. As part of this, we plan to seek views on how to improve assessments both in the short and longer term. This will cover the Work Capability Assessment for Employment Support Allowance and Universal Credit as well as the Personal Independence Payment assessment.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[11545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of when the backlog created by the suspension of face-to-face health assessments for universal credit and employment support allowance claimants will be cleared.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Throughout the pandemic, our focus has been on supporting claimants to ensure they are assessed at the earliest opportunity. To do this, we have continued to assess claimants on paper evidence, where possible, and began undertaking

telephone assessments from May 2020. In parallel, we also introduced a small number of video assessments.

Face to face Work Capability Assessments (WCA) resumed from 17 May 2021, initially for claimants we were unable to assess by telephone. We continue to work with the assessment provider, Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA), to maximise the number of WCAs completed and ensure claimants receive their correct benefit entitlement as soon as possible.

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[11546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact on claimants of universal credit and employment support allowance requiring face-to-face health and disability assessments before they can receive support of the suspension of those services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Face-to-face assessments for health and disability assessments have resumed across England, Scotland and Wales. We are committed to assessing people as quickly as possible in order that they receive the benefit they are entitled to. The resumption of face-to-face assessments, together with our enhanced capability and improved processes for telephone assessments, will allow us to do this.

Initially face-to-face assessments will only be for those who we are unable to assess by other channels. They are taking place alongside existing paper-based assessments, telephone assessments and a small number of video assessments where suitable. Our approach will be kept under review to ensure it remains aligned with the latest public health guidance.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Internet**

**Thangam Debonnaire:**

[\[7846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the HMRC data errors that created incorrect pension information on the check your state pension online service in 2019 have now been fully corrected.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP has worked closely with HMRC since issues were first raised around forecasts for State Pension. A change to the Check your State Pension forecast service was applied in April 2021.

This change ensures that individuals who are at greatest risk of having errors or omissions on their National Insurance record that may affect their State Pension forecast, are identified at the point where they request a State Pension forecast. Such individuals are advised that HMRC will take the corrective action needed in order to update their National Insurance record. Once this work is completed, a State Pension forecast will be made available.

**■ Universal Credit****Chris Stephens:** [\[11586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of new claims for universal credit were paid in full and on time in each of the most recent 12 months for which data are available.

**Will Quince:**

Monthly Universal Credit payment timeliness statistics for new claims are published in the Households on Universal Credit section of Stat-Xplore and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[8532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Universal Credit Programme Board was provided with any further direct claimant feedback to review at its meeting on 21 March 2019 in addition to the file entitled, 54. I - Paper BTL02 – UC Claimants: In Their Own Words.

**Will Quince:**

The Universal Credit Programme Board was not provided with any further direct claimant feedback to review at its meeting on 21 March 2019.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[8535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to universal claimant feedback entitled 54. I - Paper BTL02 – UC Claimants: In Their Own Words reviewed by the Universal Credit Programme Board at its meeting on 21 March 2019, whether she plans to review the process for Alternative Payment Arrangements to improve accessibility.

**Will Quince:**

Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) are available to support claimants who cannot manage their single monthly payment and where there is a risk of financial harm to the claimant and/or their family. These include more frequent payments. Staff involved in Universal Credit work closely with claimants and are able to assess which people need extra support, based on their personal circumstances. They will always consider an APA where a need has been identified by a Work Coach, case manager, or triggered by information received from the claimant, their representative or their landlord.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[8536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to universal claimant feedback entitled 54. I - Paper BTL02 – UC Claimants: In Their Own Words reviewed by the Universal Credit Programme Board at its meeting on 21 March 2019, what steps she is planning to take to reduce the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

Nobody has to wait for a payment in Universal Credit as urgent payments are available to ensure those who need it are able to receive financial support as soon as possible. Claimants can also receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Prevailing Market Rates

**The Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan):** [\[HCWS82\]](#)

On 9 June I announced a temporary reduction in the maximum student loan interest rate following the recent decline in the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured personal loans.

In accordance with the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, where the Government considers that the student loan interest rate is higher than the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured loans, we will take steps to reduce the maximum student loan interest rate.

The Government regularly monitors the interest rates set on student loans against the interest rates prevailing on the market for comparable loans.

Following a decline in the prevailing market rate, on 9 June I laid legislation to cap the maximum Post-2012 income contingent repayment undergraduate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate in line with the prevailing market rate. The cap will come into effect from 1 July 2021 and last for a period of three months.

The reduction will be 0.3 percentage point on the maximum student loan interest rate to reflect the average market rates during the preceding monitoring period.

Student loan interest rates are updated each year to take account of changes in the Retail Price Index (RPI). The updates are applied annually at the start of each academic year, 1 September. To take into account this annual change in the ordinary student loan interest rates, two separate caps will be implemented, one for the period 1 July to 31 August and one for the period 1 to 30 September.

The maximum Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate will be 5.3% between 1 July and 31 August.

The maximum Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate will be 4.2% between 1 September and 30 September.

From 1 October 2021, the Post-2012 undergraduate and Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rates will revert to the standard rate +3%.

Further caps may be put in place should the prevailing market rate continue to be below student loan interest rates.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Update on fisheries'**

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Farming, Fisheries and Food) (Victoria Prentis):** [\[HCWS86\]](#)

**Update on fisheries - conclusion of annual fisheries negotiations**

The UK and EU have now reached an agreement on fishing opportunities for the current fishing year. This concludes all annual fisheries negotiations for 2021. This has been a landmark year with the UK negotiating as an independent coastal State for the first time in over 40 years.

Throughout the negotiations we have worked as a UK team with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Governments to take advantage of our new status as an independent coastal State. The outcomes secured by the UK team will enable us to improve the sustainable management of our fish stocks in support of the whole of the UK fishing industry in the short and long term.

Collectively, from all the negotiations, the UK has secured agreement on the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 87 stocks.

**UK-EU Agreement**

The agreement we have just reached with the EU, for 70 EU-UK TACs, results in a total value of fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 of approximately 160,000 tonnes, worth approximately £333 million. This is around 26,000 tonnes more than in 2020, with an estimated value of £27m.

On non-quota stocks, due to the late conclusion of negotiations this year and the need to provide our respective industries with clarity, the UK and EU agreed that, exceptionally, tonnage limits would not be applied in 2021.

The UK and EU have instead agreed to work together through the Specialised Committee on Fisheries to develop multi-year strategies for managing non-quota stocks as a priority, as well as addressing challenges in mixed fisheries management, particularly in the Celtic Sea and on implementing a longer-term exchange system for quota.

Exchanges of quota with the EU, as part of annual negotiations, were not possible this year. However, the agreement includes a commitment to quickly develop an interim basis for exchanging fishing quota ahead of a longer-term exchange system to be decided by the Specialised Committee on Fisheries. The UK expects that quota exchanges would be part of future annual negotiations, as provided for in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

We have also agreed changes for 2021 on seabass to reduce wasteful discarding, without increasing fishing mortality.



### **UK-EU-Norway Agreement**

The trilateral negotiations between the UK, EU and Norway concluded on 16 March 2021, and set TACs for the six North Sea jointly-managed stocks. Three of these stocks were set consistent with independently assessed sustainability levels.

The agreed TACs resulted in catch reductions for North Sea cod, plaice, saithe and herring compared with 2020, whilst there were increases for haddock and whiting.

The UK and Norway also committed to several priority work areas including a review of the management of North Sea herring.

### **UK-Norway and UK-Faroes bilateral negotiations**

Since the beginning of the negotiations, we have been very clear that the UK's overriding priority in all negotiations is to agree a balanced deal in the best interests of the entire UK fishing industry. We worked hard to find a way to reach an agreement between the UK and Norway and the UK and Faroes this year, and regret that we concluded that we were too far apart.

In these negotiations, the UK sought to secure fishing opportunities for the UK industry, whilst at the same time addressing the historic imbalance between fishing opportunities taken in UK waters by other coastal states compared to those the UK took in theirs. In 2019 Norway landed approximately eight times higher value of fish from UK waters than UK vessels landed from Norwegian waters.

Whilst negotiations were constructive, neither Norway nor the Faroes were willing to provide appropriate compensation for access to fish in UK waters, without which the relationships would have been left significantly weighted against the UK. Neither coastal State was willing to conclude an agreement with the UK solely on quota exchanges.

### **Other International Negotiations**

This year the UK also participated, and reached agreement, in a number of other international negotiations. This included multilateral negotiations on TACs not covered under the EU-UK and trilateral negotiations, such as mackerel, blue whiting, Atlanto-Scandian herring, and redfish. We also took part in negotiations in several Regional Fisheries Management Organisations.

## **FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

### **■ Hong Kong Six-monthly Report**

**Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab):** [\[HCWS85\]](#)

The latest Six-monthly Report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2020. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website (

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office>). I commend the report to the House.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **Announcement of the public consultation on the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner for England**

**Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health) (Ms Nadine Dorries):** **[HCWS80]**

I would like to inform the House of the launch of a public consultation on proposed legislative provisions governing the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner for England.

As my colleagues will be aware, on 14 December 2020, the Government tabled an amendment to the Medicine and Medical Devices Bill to establish an independent Patient Safety Commissioner for England. The Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 (MMD Act) achieved Royal Assent on 11 February 2021 and on 11 April established the Commissioner position and its main duties and powers.

The introduction of a Patient Safety Commissioner also acts on the second recommendation of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, First Do No Harm, published in July 2020 by Baroness Cumberlege.

The Patient Safety Commissioner will add to and enhance the existing work that has been done to improve patient safety by acting as a champion for patients. Listening to our patients is integral to our healthcare system and the Commissioner will help to make sure patient voices are heard.

The core duties of the Commissioner are to promote the safety of patients in the context of the use of medicines and medical devices and to promote the importance of the views of patients and other members of the public in relation to the safety of medicines and medical devices.

Under the MMD Act 2021, (paragraph 6 of Schedule 1) the Secretary of State is able to make legislative provisions about the appointment and operation of the Commissioner, for example the terms of office, finances and other support for the Commissioner. As is required by the MMD Act 2021, the department has launched a public consultation to gather views from interested persons on the detail on the appointment and operation of the Commissioner. Consultation responses will be carefully considered and will feed into the required secondary legislation.

This consultation will help to ensure that the provisions governing the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner are as comprehensive as needed, so that the Commissioner will be able to work for, with and in the best interests of patients.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure the House that the Government continues to prioritise work on this initiative. The launch of this consultation represents good progress in setting up of the Commissioner.

The consultation can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-appointment-and-operation-of-the-patient-safety-commissioner>

## ■ The fifth annual report of the LeDeR programme

**Minister of State for Care (Helen Whately):**

**[HCWS81]**

I would like to acknowledge today the publication of the fifth annual report of the Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) programme, now known as 'Learning from lives and deaths – People with a learning disability and autistic people' by the University of Bristol. A copy will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Sadly, as set out in today's report, we know that some people with a learning disability have died from COVID-19, and this report provides moving, personal stories of some of those who lost their lives. My deepest sympathies are with their families and loved ones.

This annual report recommends that the needs of people with a learning disability should be built into the national policy response by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in the case of future emergency health situations. This is absolutely essential, and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken action to protect people with a learning disability and used emerging evidence to inform our policy response. For example, in October, we added adults with Down's syndrome to the clinically extremely vulnerable list following the identification of an elevated risk of severe outcomes for this group of people. And the Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation added people with severe and profound learning disabilities to group 6 for the vaccine, and people with Down's syndrome to group 4.

We value the insight that the LeDeR programme has brought us during the challenging time we have all faced over the past year. We have been able to use data from the LeDeR COVID-19 report to inform our response to the pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at the University of Bristol for their invaluable work over the past years on the LeDeR programme. Past reports have prompted action across the health and care sector, including the trialling of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training in learning disability and autism.

Today's report makes several recommendations for Government and its system partners to help to improve the care of people with a learning disability. We remain absolutely committed that people with a learning disability should, and must, receive high quality care which will in turn reduce preventable deaths and health inequalities.

NHS England has published its Action from Learning Report alongside the fifth LeDeR report, which sets out a range of work taking place to improve the safety and quality of care to reduce early deaths and health inequalities. We welcome the ongoing invaluable work by NHS England, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, in this area.

The Government's focus in 2020 was on the COVID-19 response, and our priority was to protect people's lives. We will publish a response to both the fourth and fifth reports in late summer/autumn of this year, to allow time for us to fully consider the

recommendations for the Department, and agree actions, including those on COVID-19 related issues and on mandating reporting to the LeDeR programme.

This report also highlights the disparities experienced by ethnic minority people with a learning disability. It is vital that we continue to work with our partners to tackle the poor outcomes experienced by ethnic minority people with a learning disability.

Based on the evidence from completed LeDeR reviews, the fifth annual report makes ten recommendations for the health and care system, as follows:

1. Recommendation 1 . LeDeR reviews to be undertaken through the lens of greater racial awareness. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement)
2. Recommendation 2. Local Authorities to ensure that Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) collect and publish local data on the health needs of children and adults with learning disabilities, capturing any characteristics that relate to specific ethnic groups. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), and their commissioned Primary Care Networks to take actions to reduce any disparities between people from different ethnic groups when planning local services for people with learning disabilities and their families. Accountability for this to be monitored at regional level, and by NHS England. (Audience: Local Authorities, NHS England and NHS Improvement, ICSs, NHS Race and Health Observatory)
3. Recommendation 3. A nationally endorsed standard resource is required, with local flexibility, that provides information for people with learning disabilities and their families about their legal rights and entitlements, national services available and how to access them, and local sources of support. Mechanisms must be in place for its effective distribution, particularly to people from minority ethnic groups. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement)
4. Recommendation 4. Strategically planned, long-term, targeted, joint investment is needed to strengthen partnerships with local communities and provide support for peer-to-peer networks, to build on and future-proof existing contacts and structures within local communities and increase trusted word-of-mouth communication and information sharing. (Audience: Local Authorities, ICSs, Primary Care Networks)
5. Recommendation 5. Local systems, including commissioning, to be responsive and develop strategic plans that address the longstanding needs of people with learning disabilities and their families that the COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated, including the availability of specialist learning disability teams in acute, primary and community care. (Audience: ICSs)
6. Recommendation 6. From the outset of any future public health emergency, the needs and circumstances of people with learning disabilities must be considered and built into national policy and guidance by the National Institute for Health Protection and the Department of Health and Social Care. A data collection tool should be established to capture emerging evidence relating to people with learning disabilities, which would trigger adjustments to policy, guidance, systems and

processes as required. (Audience: National Institute for Health Protection, Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement)

7. Recommendation 7. Commissioning guidance for NHS 111 services to include a requirement for the provision of specifically tailored training to NHS 111 staff about how to respond appropriately to calls about people with a learning disability or from people with a learning disability and their families. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement)
8. Recommendation 8. A LeDeR representative should routinely and as of right be involved with the child death review meeting/process for children with learning disabilities, in order to ensure that necessary information is collected and transferred into the wider LeDeR programme. ( Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement)
9. Recommendation 9. NHS England to collect and collate evidence about the needs and circumstances of people who have been subject to mental health or criminal justice restrictions and use this to inform appropriate, personalised service provision for this group of people. While waiting for this evidence, robust after-care support (as required by S117 of the Mental Health Act) must be provided. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement, Local Authorities)
10. Recommendation 10. Progress on actions in response to previous recommendations about minimising the risk of aspiration pneumonia in people with learning disabilities needs to be published. (Audience: NICE, Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement)

Whilst we have taken urgent action during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the lives of people with a learning disability, we know that there is more to be done as we begin to move out of the pandemic. We will continue to work with partners to ensure improvements are made, and to address the recommendations in the reports.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ EEA citizens and the right to work and rent schemes

#### **The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Immigration Compliance and Justice (Chris Philp):**

**[HCWS83]**

The UK has left the European Union (EU) and the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020 ended free movement law in the UK on 31 December 2020. On 1 January 2021, a grace period of six-months began, during which time relevant aspects of free movement law have been saved to allow eligible EEA citizens and their family members resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. This period ends on 30 June 2021.

We have committed to providing parity between EEA and non-EEA citizens under the new immigration system. All migrants residing and coming to the UK will be required to obtain the correct immigration status, regardless of their nationality. From 1 July 2021,

EEA citizens and their family members require UK immigration status to evidence their rights and entitlements in the UK, in the same way as other foreign nationals, such as their right to work or right to rent.

The Right to Work and Right to Rent Schemes (the Schemes) were introduced as part of a suite of measures designed to tackle and deter illegal immigration. They are intended to prevent individuals without lawful immigration status in the UK from taking up employment or accessing accommodation in the private rented sector; and to support efforts to tackle those who exploit vulnerable migrants, often in very poor conditions.

Employers and landlords are required to carry out simple checks, applicable to everyone, including British citizens, to ensure the individual has lawful status in the UK before they employ or let a property to an individual.

Today, I have laid before Parliament the Immigration (Restrictions on Employment and Residential Accommodation) (Prescribed Requirements and Codes of Practice) And Licencing Act 2003 (Personal and Premises Licences) (Forms) Order.

The Order seeks to amend the Schemes' lists of acceptable documents which demonstrate a right to work or a right to rent, by removing EEA passports and national identity cards. It provides the following additions to the lists: an Irish passport or passport card, Frontier Worker Permit, Service Provider of Switzerland visa, and documents issued by the Crown Dependencies EU Settlement Schemes.

From 1 July, employers and landlords will undertake right to work and right to rent checks on EEA citizens, who have been issued with digital evidence of their UK immigration status using the Home Office online services. We have already begun this journey, with employers being able to use the online right to work service since January 2019. Since the launch of the optional online right to work service, there have been over 1.3 million views by individuals and over 390,000 views by employers carrying out right to work checks digitally. The online right to rent checking service went live in November 2020, and since then, there have been over 36,000 profile views by individuals, and over 6,500 views by landlords carrying out right to rent checks digitally.

The online services make it simpler for employers and landlords to carry out the checks, as they do not need to see or check documents. The checks can be carried out by video call, as the individual's immigration status information is provided in real time directly from Home Office systems. The service is secure and free to use.

However, we recognise that some individuals are anxious about navigating a digital system. Therefore, users will be supported to adapt through clear guidance, with direct support available for those who are less digitally confident, ensuring they are not disadvantaged due to any inability to access or use digital services, including where they have no access to a device or the internet.

The Order also enables employers and landlords to confirm via the Home Office Employer or Landlord Checking Service a Certificate of Application or document issued by the UK, Bailiwick of Jersey or Bailiwick of Guernsey EU Settlement Schemes, which confirms an outstanding application made by the 30 June deadline. This will ensure that

EEA citizens can continue to evidence their eligibility to work and rent until the application is finally determined.

The Order also amends [The Immigration \(Residential Accommodation\) \(Prescribed Requirements and Codes of Practice\) Order 2014](#) by extending the list of those granted status as a visitor who can prove their right to rent using the combination of a national passport, plus proof of their arrival within the last six months (for example a physical or electronic air/sea/rail ticket or boarding pass) to EEA citizens.

Finally, the Order amends and updates the existing statutory codes of practice to reflect these important changes which will improve the operation of the Schemes. It also makes consequential amendments to the Licensing Act 2003 (Personal licenses) Regulations 2005 and the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licenses and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005, and the Illegal Working Compliance Order Regulations 2016, to align with the changes in this order in relation to right to work check.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Local Government Update

**Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS84\]](#)

On 24 March 2021, I announced to the House that I was minded to appoint Commissioners to take over functions associated with highways, regeneration, property management, together with associated audit and governance arrangements at Liverpool City Council (“the Authority”). I also announced that I was minded to appoint Commissioners to take over functions associated with the appointment and dismissal of statutory officers.

At the same time, I also announced proposals to introduce electoral changes, in particular:

- to make an Order using my powers in the Local Government Act 2000 to provide for whole council elections in 2023 and every fourth year thereafter; and
- to direct the Authority to consider and consult upon a new submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the current boundary review, which includes consideration of a proposal to reduce the number of Councillors to those consistent with elections on a single member ward basis, and be approved by the Commissioners.

These proposals followed the publication of the independent Best Value Inspection Report, led by Max Caller CBE, which concluded that the Authority had failed to comply with its Best Value Duty over a number of years. The Report did not comment on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, on Mayor Steve Rotheram, or other councils in Merseyside.

The main finding of the Report, as set out in the Inspector’s covering letter, is that: “Liverpool City Council itself, under the officer leadership of Tony Reeves, has started to

make some of the improvements necessary. However, the burden of the police investigation, the pandemic, and the legacy of past actions by the Council has prevented speedy progress. At political level, the Council needs a reset, until that happens and the work that is currently being undertaken is continued at pace and embedded, I cannot be confident about continued progress.”

As part of my announcement in March, I invited the Authority to make representations about my proposals on or before 24 May 2021. The Authority and two advocacy groups made representations, as did 13 members of the public. Most representations were supportive of the intervention and the proposal to appoint Commissioners. However, a number expressed concern about aspects of the electoral reforms which I had proposed, specifically in relation to the proposal to introduce single member wards and to reduce the number of Councillors for the City.

#### *Best Value Intervention in Liverpool City Council*

Following consideration of these representations, and further consideration of the Inspector’s Report, I have decided to proceed with the proposals that I announced on 24 March, with the following modifications:

- The Commissioners’ functions relating to the appointment and dismissal of statutory officers are expanded to include the role of Assistant Director Governance, Audit and Assurance. This modification is to reflect what was proposed in the Inspection Report and has been accepted by the Authority;
- The Direction to the Council to consider and consult upon a new submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), as part of the current boundary review, is clarified to include consideration of a proposal to reduce the number of Councillors to those consistent with elections on the basis of predominantly single member wards, that is single member wards across the whole Council area save where the LGBCE consider a multi member ward is essential to balance their statutory duties of delivering electoral equality, reflecting interests and identities of local communities, and of promoting effective and convenient local government. This modification is in response to the representations I received; and
- As part of my intention to make an Order using my powers in the Local Government Act 2000 to achieve the fresh start the Authority requires by providing full Council elections from 2023, I am now setting out my intention that the Order specifically provides for:
  - Liverpool City Council to hold all-out elections every four years from 2023 and to adjust retirement dates for existing councillors accordingly;
  - Postponement for one year of the May 2022 elections of one third of Liverpool City councillors and extend terms of office accordingly; and
  - The movement of the next election for Liverpool City’s mayor to 2023 from 2024 and shorten the term of office accordingly.



I am mindful that the lessons from past interventions suggest that once Commissioners are in post additional issues can arise[1]. I have therefore asked Commissioners to specifically have regard to:

- the Council's LGBCE submission;
- the Council's governance referendum;
- the financial position of the Council; and
- broader service delivery insofar as they raise concerns for the Council's wider improvement journey.

I will write to the Lead Commissioner asking him to provide assurance to me on these issues as well as to work with and support the Council to minimise the risk of further intervention.

*Rational for whole council elections in Liverpool City Council*

These modifications will help address the Inspection Report recommendation of ensuring as much stability as possible during a period of significant change. Going forward, the city mayoral and council elections will take place in the same year every four years. The Order will be subject to the negative resolution procedure and will be made as soon as practicable and well in advance of the local government elections currently scheduled for 2022. Following the making of the Order, the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England will be able to undertake their electoral review, with its necessary legislation, subject to Parliamentary approval.

My decision to make an Order providing for Liverpool City Council to have whole council elections reflects not only the recommendations in the Best Value Inspection Report but also our past experience of the merits of whole council elections. The absence of such elections is often a consistent feature of under-performing councils and a common thread through many council interventions[2]. I of course recognise that there are many excellent councillors up and down the country performing their duties effectively with elections by thirds or other patterns. But holding elections three years out of four, or every other year, risks creating a culture of perpetual electioneering in a council where there is little focus on the strategic, an inability to address longer term challenges and leadership which can lack the stability needed for a high performing authority.

In contrast, holding whole council elections every fourth year can facilitate stable, strategic local leadership, delivering a clear programme for which it can be held to account by the electorate, and having the time to tackle some of the longer term issues its communities might face. Whole council elections can thus add a higher degree of accountability, and the stability they can bring can help effective partnership working and give greater confidence to the business community in their dealings with the council. Whole council elections are also more cost effective than holding elections say three years out of four, and hence I am clear they represent better value for money for local taxpayers.

Accordingly, for all these reasons I would like to take this opportunity strongly to urge all those councils still not holding whole council elections to consider using the powers which

Parliament has given them to switch to such elections. I believe this could lead to councils providing stronger, more accountable local leadership better able to serve their communities, promote local economic growth, and drive forward the levelling up of opportunity and prosperity across the country. If councils which still elect by thirds or halves now take the opportunity to switch to whole council elections, this could significantly strengthen local government and its ability to serve local people. It is an opportunity I hope all other councils will take in due course.

#### *Appointing Commissioners for Liverpool City Council*

I have decided to appoint four Commissioners forming a team with a proven record in adherence to the rule of law, leadership and delivering cultural change, together with specific expertise relevant to their functions:

- Mike Cunningham QPM (Lead Commissioner) – Has been involved in policing for more than 30 years, most recently as Chief Executive of the College of Policing from 2018 – 2020, the standards setting body for policing in England and Wales. Formerly one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Constabulary, inspecting forces in the north of England and Northern Ireland, and the national lead inspector for the development and implementation of inspections into police efficiency, legitimacy and leadership, and Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police.
- Joanna Killian (Local Government Improvement Commissioner) – Has more than 30 years of experience in the public sector delivering transformational change and service improvement. Since March 2018 she has been Chief Executive of Surrey County Council. Prior to this Joanna worked at KPMG and was also Chief Executive of Essex County Council for 9 years.
- Neil Gibson (Highways Commissioner) – Former Executive Director of Transport Economy and Environment for Buckinghamshire County Council, where he also acted for a time as Interim Chief Executive. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation and former President of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.
- Deborah McLaughlin (Regeneration Commissioner) – Extensive experience working in Regeneration and Housing for over 30 years across public and private sectors, including as Director of Housing at Manchester City Council, regional director for the North West at Homes England and Director of Capita’s real estate business. Also worked at the Audit Commission as a Best Value Inspector and auditor.

The Commissioners have been appointed for the period from 10 June 2021 to 9 June 2024 or such earlier or later time as I determine. I am clear that the Directions should operate for as long, and only as long, and only in the form, as necessary.

I want to be clear that most decisions will continue to be made by the Council; the intention being that Commissioners will only use their powers as a last resort if they are dissatisfied with the Council’s improvement processes.

The Government will continue to work closely with the political, the business and the cultural leadership of the city and with the wider region, including with Steve Rotheram, the Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.

#### *Conclusion*

We will do all that we can to support Liverpool, as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to give confidence to those who want to invest in the city to contract with the Council, and to do business in the city.

I have published the Directions and Explanatory Memorandum associated with this announcement on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/inspection-into-the-governance-of-liverpool-city-council>.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-cultural-and-governance-failings-in-local-authorities-lessons-from-recent-interventions>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-cultural-and-governance-failings-in-local-authorities-lessons-from-recent-interventions>

## TRANSPORT

### ■ UK Second-Generation Search and Rescue Aviation Programme Invitation to Tender

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts):**  
[\[HCWS79\]](#)

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency plays a vital role in saving lives, and the Government's second-generation search and rescue aviation programme called UKSAR2G has now reached a pivotal point. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency announces today the shortlisted companies that will be invited to tender for the provision of the next decade of Coastguard aviation.

The UKSAR2G Programme will procure services that will provide the next generation of Coastguard search and rescue helicopters, planes and remotely piloted drones. New technology will enable the Coastguard to find people who need help even more quickly.

Data has been used extensively to enable aviation operators and manufacturers to put forward innovative solutions that meet the complex demands of all the emergency services and the other Government Departments that benefit from Coastguard aviation long into the future. The programme will build upon the success of the current contracts which provide search and rescue helicopters and reconnaissance planes.

Like the arrangements it replaces, UKSAR2G will be a pan-Government aviation service that supports not just Her Majesty's Coastguard, but also UK policing in the search for lost and missing people as well as the Health Services in the transfer of critically ill people between NHS hospitals. This will also continue to support the work of our colleagues in other law enforcement bodies in an even more collaborative fashion than today. The scale of this collaboration is seldom seen in Government procurement. The MCA should

be commended for thinking beyond requirements to maximise the value from its investment in aviation services.

The UKSAR2G Invitation to Tender will be issued today to shortlisted bidders to provide their responses by the end of August 2021. Following negotiation, the MCA expects to award the contract in mid-2022. This will allow time for the successful bidder or bidders to establish operations before commencing service from 2024 for at least 10 years.

Since 2013, the UK search and rescue helicopter service has been delivered by Bristow Helicopters Ltd, with planes being provided by 2Excel. All existing aviation services currently under contract to the MCA will be replaced once the new contract commences.

The transition out from the current contracts will start 30 September 2024 and runs through to 31 December 2026, to guarantee a smooth transition of aviation services.