



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 June 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:39 P.M., 11 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

#### ■ Companies: Ownership

**Liam Byrne:**

[\[7743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) companies and (b) individuals who have not complied with requirements to declare beneficial ownership; and how many sanctions have been levied against individuals or companies for non-compliance.

**Paul Scully:**

On 1 April 2021 the number of registered companies in the UK that had not complied with requirements to declare beneficial ownership, by not listing an ultimate beneficial owner (Person of Significant Control: PSC), was 11,107 (0.25% of the effective register). Between 01/04/19 and 31/03/2021, The Insolvency Service (which is responsible for prosecuting these offences) has achieved a total of 210 convictions, of which 91 companies and 119 directors were convicted for offences relating to the beneficial ownership of companies. Two of the convicted directors also received disqualification orders for a period of 3 years.

Companies House is unable to offer an estimation of the individuals who have not complied with requirements to declare beneficial ownership. Until a company registers the details of the individual, or a statement declaring why no details have been provided, it has no indication for the cause of the non-compliance and cannot, therefore, provide a reliable estimate.

In addition to the companies that have provided details of their Persons of Significant Control, there will be a proportion of compliant companies that have legitimately not provided details of their PSC. This is because either an exemption has been applied or a statement registered in accordance with law declaring why no details have been provided.

#### ■ Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges

**Alan Brown:**

[\[8657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason electricity interconnectors from outside the UK are excluded from grid transmission charges which are applied to renewable energy generators within the UK; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Interconnectors do not pay use of systems charges for the transmission network, and there are no plans to change this. The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement states there should be no network charges on individual transactions on electricity interconnectors, in order to ensure their efficient use and reduce barriers to trade.

As with generators in Britain, foreign generators exporting power to Britain through interconnectors are subject to a range of charges and taxes in their own countries. Domestic generators can also benefit from exporting without paying for access to networks in other countries.

### ■ **Energy Supply: Fees and Charges**

**Alan Brown:** [\[7865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May to Question 3037, what assessment he has made of the merits of reviewing of the grid charging system.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

I recognise the important role that network charges have on the electricity system. Network charging is a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator. Ofgem is currently reviewing some network charging arrangements and plans to consult on proposals this year. The Department is in close touch with Ofgem to understand how its review proposals can help support the Government's policy outcomes that will be set out in the energy sector Strategy and Policy Statement, including delivery of a net zero energy system at lowest cost for consumers.

### ■ **European Marine Energy Centre: EU Grants and Loans**

**Alan Brown:** [\[8656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the sum of EU funding that the European Marine Energy Centre uses to maintain operations; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Established in 2003, the European Marine Energy Centre was set up by several public sector organisations following a recommendation by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee in 2001. To date, around £39 million of public funding has been invested in the Centre by the Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, The Carbon Trust, UK Government, Scottish Enterprise, the European Union and Orkney Islands Council. In 2011, EMEC became financially self-sufficient.

### ■ **European Marine Energy Centre: Finance**

**Alan Brown:** [\[8655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the European Marine Energy Centre on the UK Government providing funding to replace the existing EU funding stream the Centre utilises.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Government has not held any talks with EMEC regarding replacement funding for the EU funding the centre currently utilises. EMEC was established through support from the UK Government in 2003 in Orkney. The Government has a long

history of supporting the development and deployment of wave and tidal stream technologies in the UK. Since 2003 various bodies across Government have provided innovation/R&D funding of £175m to the wave and tidal sectors (almost £80m since 2010).

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[8569]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 27 April 2021 to Question 183114, when he plans to publish the details of his Department's plans for a replacement of the Green Homes Grant Scheme in order to decarbonise homes in line with the Climate Change Committee's advice on the Sixth Carbon Budget; and if he will take into account the findings of IPSOS Mori's evaluation of the Green Homes Grant in developing that scheme.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Since the Green Homes Grant Vouchers scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2021, we have refocussed efforts and funding on alternative approaches to maximise the delivery of home retrofits for those most in need.

This is through expanding the funding commitment for both the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme with £300 million of new funding in financial year 21/22.

We plan to publish the Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out our approach for reducing emissions from buildings, both in terms of action over the coming decade and our longer-term strategic approach to 2050.

Any decisions about future funding are a matter for the spending review. We will, of course reflect on lessons learned from the closure of Green Homes Grant Vouchers.

## ■ Holidays Abroad: Coronavirus

**Julian Sturdy:**

**[8589]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department has given to (a) travel companies and (b) insurers on refunds for holidays booked to green list destinations that are subsequently moved to the amber or red travel list under covid-19 regulations.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government is clear that businesses should treat their customers fairly and responsibly and in accordance with their statutory rights, and where disagreements arise in respect to holiday cancellations and refunds, they should seek to find a mutually acceptable solution.

The Package Travel Regulations 2018 and the Consumer Rights Act 2015 outline the conditions under which a consumer is entitled to a refund from travel companies if a travel package is cancelled or severely disrupted. The Competition and Markets Authority has made clear, for instance in its open letter to the package travel sector of

13 May 2021, that organisers of package holidays are expected to comply with travellers' statutory rights, for example by offering consumers a right to cancel and receive a full refund within 14 days if, due to circumstances beyond its control, the organiser needs to alter significantly any of the main characteristics of the package. Travelling to countries against FCDO advice is likely to invalidate customers' travel insurance.

Furthermore, the [Passenger Covid-19 Charter](#) was published by Department for Transport on 17 May 2021, providing information on the rights and responsibilities of passengers booking travel while Covid-19 restrictions remain in place. It also sets out reasonable expectations for industry, including offering flexibility, where possible, for bookings affected by changes to Covid-19 restrictions and to traffic light categories.

## ■ Hydrogen

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[7807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the Government's hydrogen strategy; and what assessment his Department's has made of progress on expanding the UK's hydrogen production capacity to date.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy is set to be published before summer recess and will lay out what is required to build a hydrogen economy fit for 2030, Carbon Budget 6 and beyond, whilst maximising economic benefits and supporting jobs and skills.

The UK currently produces only a minimal amount of low carbon hydrogen, for localised transport projects or trials and testing in other end uses, and a significant increase in production levels will be required to meet our future energy needs. My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan was clear on our aim for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy. We have already published an expression of interest for our Low Carbon Hydrogen Supply 2 Competition to support further innovation in this area.

We will also consult, alongside the Hydrogen Strategy, on policy instruments to further support an increase in low carbon hydrogen production, including the £240m Net-Zero Hydrogen Fund (NZHF) and our preferred long term, sustainable business model, which we will finalise in 2022.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[7809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allocating funding to hydrogen-based steelmaking to decarbonise the UK steel industry.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan was clear on our aim for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy. The forthcoming Hydrogen Strategy will set out what is required to build a hydrogen economy fit for 2030, Carbon Budget 6 and beyond, whilst maximising economic benefits. We will also consult on priority policies, including hydrogen business models, a low carbon hydrogen standard, and the £240m Net Zero Hydrogen Fund.

The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, published on 17 March, commits to work with the newly constituted 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-based steelmaking is one of the technological approaches being examined as part of this process.

To support these efforts, the Government has announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the UK steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production, through investment in new technologies and processes. The decarbonisation of the steel sector and industry more widely will also be supported through the £1 billion CCUS Infrastructure Fund (CIF) and the £240m NetZero Hydrogen Fund.

**■ Net Zero Expert Group****Caroline Lucas:**[\[7780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) membership, (b) terms of reference and (c) future dates of meetings of the Net Zero Expert Group.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Net Zero Expert Group is an informal group of experts helping advise government on driving forward net zero, particularly on taking a whole systems approach to net zero and delivery of my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's 10 point plan. It includes a wide range of leading experts in climate, economic sectors, science, systems thinking, and links to industries that can help in the transition to net zero. Attendance for the roundtable held on the 26th May will be published through the usual quarterly ministerial transparency reporting. Future meeting dates have yet to be set.

Achieving net zero is a top priority for the government. Government has met and continues to talk to a wide range of individuals and organisations to get the best advice possible.

**■ New Businesses: West Yorkshire****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[8774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to encourage new businesses to begin operating in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire.

**Paul Scully:**

A wide range of support and funding is available in Wakefield and across West Yorkshire for businesses at all stages, from start-ups and early-stage companies to established businesses that are ready to expand and grow.

Start Up Loans, part of Government's British Business Bank, provide government-backed loans and support for businesses who struggle to access other forms of finance. New businesses and those who have been trading for up to 24 months can apply. Since the scheme launched in 2012 to the end of April 2021, 308 loans have been approved worth £2,804,475. In the Wakefield constituency 94 loans have been delivered worth £739,389. In Yorkshire and the Humber, 7,160 loans have been delivered worth £64,629,043.

Business support in Wakefield and across West Yorkshire includes the Business Growth Programme 2021/22 which comprises capital investment grants for businesses that can deliver jobs growth and safeguarding focussed on productivity, innovation, digital, resource efficiency and new start enterprises. It is available to existing businesses and inward investors and is supported by £7m from Government's Getting Building Fund, extending services provided to March 2021 through the Government's Local Growth Fund.

The **Ad:Venture programme** - dedicated business start-up programme, with young West Yorkshire businesses benefitting from a tailored mix of practical advice, coaching, academic support, incubation work space, finance brokerage and low rate loans. To April 2021, 42 Wakefield businesses have benefitted from the programme, with £2.4m grant awarded to 489 businesses across the City Region.

The **Entrepreneurship Support Package 2021** launching this summer will encourage people from all communities across West Yorkshire to set up new businesses and help them tap into the wider sources of support. The package will use at least £6m of investment funds provided by Government through the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal.

The Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Strategic Inward Investment service supports new investors and businesses to move into Wakefield and West Yorkshire. Government is also supporting two Enterprise Zone sites within Wakefield to attract new business investment and jobs in the region.

At Budget in March 2021, Government announced two **Towns Fund** deals in Wakefield district worth £49m, providing the tools and funding for places to design and deliver local economic growth priorities and encourage and facilitate new investment in Wakefield. The Government invited eight towns across West Yorkshire to develop investment plans and will be announcing further Towns Fund deals in due course.

With BEIS Growth Hub funding support, the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership's Business Support Service provides a single point of access to a wide range of national and local support and funding. The Government has also supported LEPs in England to create a network of 38 Growth Hubs which deliver impartial

advice and support to businesses of all sizes and stages of growth and join up national and local offers. The Leeds City Region Growth Hub supports businesses across West Yorkshire and the Wakefield constituency. Businesses can search online [www.the-lep.com/business-support](http://www.the-lep.com/business-support), email [businessgrowth@the-lep.com](mailto:businessgrowth@the-lep.com) or call 0113 348 1818 to speak to an adviser by telephone.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [8775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new businesses were registered in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire in the 2020-21 financial year.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [8776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new businesses have been registered in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire from the start of the 2021-22 financial year to 27 May 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department does not currently hold data on new business registrations for the 2020-21 financial year or for the 2021-22 financial year to 27 May 2021. (8775)

In the 2019 calendar year 11,005 new businesses were registered in West Yorkshire including Wakefield. 1,320 new businesses were registered in the Wakefield constituency in the same year[1]. (8776)

[1] These figures are from the latest data release (Business demography, UK: 2019) published in November 2020, with the next release to be announced.

## ■ Re-employment

**Rachael Maskell:** [8672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to bring forward legislative proposals to end the practice of fire and rehire.

**Rachael Maskell:** [8673]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to end the practice of fire and rehire.

**Paul Scully:**

This Government has been clear that we expect employers to treat their employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership. Using threats about firing and rehiring as a negotiation tactic is unacceptable. We expect employers and employees to negotiate new terms and conditions and there are laws around how this must be done, and legal protections in place when firms are considering redundancies.

As we had limited evidence of how firing and rehiring tactics are used, we asked Acas to conduct an evidence-gathering exercise. We welcome Acas' report on this work which was published on 8 June.

It finds general agreement that fire and rehire should only be used in limited circumstances – such as to prevent job losses when other options have been exhausted. At times, negotiations will sometimes fail and employers may need to make difficult decisions, in order to avoid redundancies and to ensure their business can survive and succeed. We have therefore asked Acas to produce clearer and more comprehensive guidance to help employers explore all the options before considering ‘fire and rehire’.

## ■ Sanitary Protection: Perfume

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[7844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to regulate the (a) addition and (b) labelling of perfumes in menstrual products.

**Paul Scully:**

The UK has a comprehensive consumer safety and protection regulatory framework that covers menstrual and sanitary products, this requires producers and distributors to ensure their products are safe before they are placed on the market.

The safety of menstrual and sanitary products is regulated by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSR). Under the GPSR, manufacturers are not required to list ingredients for their product.

These regulations are within scope of the review of the Product Safety Framework which is being carried out by the Office for Product Safety and Standards. This work will ensure that the UK product safety framework continues to be fit for purpose and adequately protects consumers so that our product safety system remains one of the best in the world.

## ■ Tour Operators: Restart Grant Scheme

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[7786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that tour operators in the travel sector can access Restart Grant funding.

**Paul Scully:**

The Restart Grants announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 March 2021 are one-off grants to businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors, to support businesses to reopen as Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed. Non-essential retail businesses, such as travel agencies, are able to receive Restart Grants of up to £6,000.

All support is available through Local Authorities in England, as they administer all grant funding and take decisions on eligibility and the value of grant to be paid. The Government is working closely with Local Authorities to ensure that funding can get to the right places as quickly as practicable.

The main service principle will ultimately determine which threshold of Restart funding a business receives; this is based on what constitutes fifty per cent or more of the activity of the business in question. Businesses will need to declare their main service.

Local Authorities will need to exercise their reasonable judgement to determine whether or not a business is eligible for a grant, and under which funding threshold, and be satisfied that they have taken reasonable and practicable steps to pay eligible businesses, and to pay them the correct amount.

Further guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

## ■ Wind Power: Celtic Sea

**Selaine Saxby:**

**[8791]**

To ask the Secretary of State, what steps he plans to take ahead of COP26 to achieve the Government's (a) net zero target and (b) levelling-up agenda in the context of the development of floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK has achieved record clean growth - between 1990 and 2019, our economy grew by 78% while our emissions decreased by 44%, the fastest in the G7. The government has recently laid legislation for the UK's sixth carbon budget, proposing a target which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This marks a decisive step towards net zero by 2050 and builds on the series of ambitious plans we have announced since committing to net zero emissions in law, including through my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan and our new UN climate target to reduce emissions in 2030 by at least 68% compared to 1990 levels – the highest reduction target made by a major economy to date.

Through the Ten Point Plan, our Energy White Paper and Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, we have set out concrete steps we will take to build back greener from the pandemic and reach net zero emissions by 2050. Ahead of COP26, we will bring forward further bold proposals, including a Net Zero Strategy, to cut emissions and create new jobs and industries across the whole country.

The Ten Point Plan announced our aim to quadruple the capacity of our offshore wind available to generate 40GW, including 1GW of floating offshore wind by 2030 - enough to power every home in the country. To do this we are investing £160 million for ports and infrastructure, which could support up to 60,000 jobs. The government is working with the offshore wind sector, through the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, to grow and strengthen a competitive UK based supply chain creating jobs around the UK.

**DEFENCE****■ Afghanistan: Interpreters**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan interpreters have been relocated within Afghanistan under the intimidation scheme since its inception.

**James Heappey:**

Under the previous intimidation policy, we have also provided a range of support to a significant number of Locally Employed Staff. 37 of which were recommended for an internal move within Afghanistan and Her Majesty's Government provided funding to assist them with their relocation. Other support includes bespoke security advice and for the most serious cases relocation to the UK.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Afghan interpreters are able to be considered for relocation if they do not have an LSU number.

**James Heappey:**

The Labour Support Unit (LSU) number is the local staff members employee number. So providing this is the fastest way to verify someone's employment with the Ministry of Defence (MOD). However, there are other searches that can be completed to see whether employment can be confirmed. Although these searches do take longer to complete, they could help to verify whether someone was employed by the MOD or another part of Her Majesty's Government (HMG). If the applicant does not have an LSU number (because they were not directly employed by HMG) the applicant may still be eligible for relocation dependent on their particular status.

**■ Africa: Security**

**Mark Pritchard:** [\[11513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support the armed forces of (a) Mali, (b) Chad, (c) Mauritania, (d) Niger and (e) Burkina Faso in preventing attacks by militants.

**James Heappey:**

The UK provides a range of support for partner forces in the Sahel, focused on increasing their capacity and resilience, and preventing conflict, violent extremism and instability across the region.

In Mali, we have provided assistance through the funding of a small number of professional development courses for Malian personnel. However, following the coup in June 2021, we have adjusted this limited support to focus on broader stabilisation programmes such as reducing community-level violence, improving the conditions for political settlement, enhancing the understanding of International Humanitarian Law and improving the effectiveness of stabilisation efforts.

In Chad, the UK's capacity building programme is delivered through the Multi National Joint Task Force, supporting operations against violent extremists in the Lake Chad Basin. The programme is primarily designed to tackle the threat from Improved Explosive Devices, but also provides training on operational planning and strategic communications.

The UK is not currently providing assistance to the Mauritanian armed forces, but has previously worked with them on maritime security, specifically improving their capability to protect their Exclusive Economic Zone.

In Niger and Burkina Faso, we have supported places on a small number of professional development courses. We have also helped the regional counter terrorism force, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, to improve its strategic communications capacity as a way of building trust with local populations.

#### ■ **Armed Forces Legal Aid Scheme: Northern Ireland**

**Johnny Mercer:**

[\[7880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on legal aid to (a) veterans and (b) serving personnel in relation to Troubles prosecutions and incidents in each of the last five years.

**Leo Docherty:**

It is taking time to collate the information needed to answer the hon. Member's question. I will write to him when it is available, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

#### ■ **Armed Forces: Foreign Nationals**

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[8699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel with non-UK nationality have been deployed in support of Operation Rescript and Operation Broadshare.

**James Heapey:**

A total of 1,430 Service personnel with Non-UK nationality were deployed in support of Operation Rescript.

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

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ **Commonwealth Games: Shropshire**

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[10281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that Shropshire plays a role in supporting the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Birmingham 2022 will be the biggest sporting event ever held in the West Midlands and it provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase the very best of the region to the rest of the world. These Games will be about far more than 11 days of sport and will create significant opportunities including job creation, community and sports facilities, an exciting cultural programme and a timely boost to businesses and tourism for the whole of the West Midlands. An additional £24 million investment to create a Business and Tourism Programme will ensure we maximise the economic opportunities hosting the Games provides for the region and the UK.

Birmingham 2022 is providing a boost for jobs and businesses across the UK, with a total procurement spend of around £350 million. The Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee, which is responsible for the operational delivery of the Games, held a webinar in November 2020 with the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce to highlight how Shropshire businesses can take advantage of the opportunities the Games will provide, including bidding for potential contracts. There will also be many other activities and opportunities open to the residents of Shropshire, including the volunteering programme which launched on 1 June 2021 and is seeking over 13,000 volunteers to help deliver the Games.

**■ Newspaper Press: Internet****Damian Green:**[\[10133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Digital Markets Unit has plans to create a code of conduct covering technology platforms' relationship with news organisations; when that code of conduct will be published; and if he will make a statement.

**Damian Green:**[\[10134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what role the Digital Markets Unit will have in tackling monopolistic behaviour among tech companies in promoting news content.

**Damian Green:**[\[10136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to consult on the final form and functions of the Digital Markets Unit; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

In November last year, the government announced that it would establish a new pro-competition regime for digital markets. At the heart of that regime will be a mandatory code of conduct to govern the relationships between dominant firms and different groups of users that rely on their services, to promote fair trading, open choices and trust and transparency. It will cover the relationships between news publishers and platforms.

A non-statutory Digital Markets Unit (DMU) was established in April, housed in the CMA, to introduce, maintain and enforce the code of conduct. The Unit has begun to operationalise the new regime, and the Digital Secretary has asked it to work with the communications regulator Ofcom to look specifically at how a code of conduct would govern the relationships between platforms and content providers such as news publishers, including to ensure they are as fair and reasonable as possible.

We will consult on the form and function of the DMU this year, and legislate to put it on a statutory footing as soon as parliamentary time allows.

## ■ Technology: Nature Conservation

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

**[10153]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that technology companies support efforts to tackle wildlife crime and the illegal wildlife trade.

**Matt Warman:**

In March, the Government hosted a roundtable with a group of conservation charities, tech companies and experts to discuss and better understand the challenges and opportunities facing the conservation sector, and the nexus with digital technologies.

This is an important year for the world and this government. At COP26 we will unite parties to help accelerate action toward tackling climate change, which includes how we take forward action to protect and restore critical ecosystems.

<https://ukcop26.org/cop26-goals/>

This work is ongoing, and my Department is committed to further understanding the opportunities and links between our collective goals for COP26 and conservation efforts. We will continue to engage with colleagues across government, Non-Government Organisations, conservation experts and tech companies in this regard.

## ■ Television Licences: Older People

**Stuart Anderson:**

**[10654]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the BBC on the reform to the over 75's TV Licence concession.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government regularly meets the BBC to discuss a wide range of issues, including the over 75s concession. The government remains deeply disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

However, the Digital Economy Act 2017 provides that the future of the concession is the responsibility of the BBC, not of the government. The BBC must ensure that it

supports those affected by its decision, and it must look at how it uses its substantial licence fee income to support older people.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Department of Education: Complaints

**Peter Kyle:** [\[8680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many complaints he has received about his Department from (a) parents and (b) teachers since (i) March 2020 and (ii) March 2015.

**Nick Gibb:**

The attached tables detail the number of complaints sent by parents and teachers about the Department for Education for each 12 month period starting on March 2015 and March 2020. These are not complaints about Government policies, but about the provision of services from the Department.

**Attachments:**

1. 8680\_table [8680\_table\_parent\_teacher\_complaints\_March\_2015\_to\_2021.xls]

### ■ Religion: Education

**Luke Pollard:** [\[8733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether schools are required to include the teaching of RE in the education recovery plans of pupils that have lost learning during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

Religious education (RE) is not an optional subject for state funded schools. They must teach RE to all pupils throughout all Key Stages up to age 18. Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum is important to the academic, social, and personal development of young people. These requirements have not changed because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Department is working with a broad range of stakeholders to develop a range of short, medium, and long term options to ensure all young people recover their education over the term of this Government.

### ■ School Exclusions Review

**Peter Kyle:** [\[8678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendations of the Timpson Review of School Exclusion, published in May 2019.

**Nick Gibb:**

Good behaviour and discipline in schools is crucial if children are to reach their full potential. The Department supports head teachers to use suspensions and

expulsions when required as part of creating calm and disciplined classrooms that bring out the best in every pupil. Expulsion should only be used as a last resort, and expulsion from school should not mean exclusion from education.

Since the publication of the Timpson Review and agreeing the recommendations in principle, the Government has been pursuing a programme of work on school behaviour across the school system. In April we commenced the Behaviour Hubs programme, investing £10 million that will help schools to develop and sustain a culture where good behaviour is the norm. Training is also being reformed as part of the Early Career Framework, so that all new teachers will be shown how to effectively manage behaviour in their first two years in the profession from September 2021. The Department will continue to work with Ofsted to tackle the practice of 'off-rolling' which is an unacceptable practice. Additionally, the Department will be consulting on how to help head teachers remove phones in schools, and other revisions to the Department's behaviour and discipline and expulsions guidance, later in the year.

The Department intends to go further and is committed to improving outcomes for children and young people in alternative provision who are most at risk of expulsion and disengaging from education. The Department will set out its plans in the forthcoming SEND review.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Breeding: Licensing

**Paul Maynard:** [7777]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what licensing schemes have been put in place for animal establishments since 2010.

**Paul Maynard:** [7778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his policy is on licensing (a) livery yards and horse breeders and (b) animal sanctuaries.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government continues to take positive action to protect and improve the welfare of animals. Licensing schemes brought in since 2010 include The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010 and The Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012 which expired on 19 January 2020.

In addition, the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations were introduced in 2018. These regulations were developed to help improve welfare standards across a range of activities involving animals including animal boarding and pet selling establishments, dog breeders and establishments exhibiting animals or hiring out horses. Further guidance on which activities might be considered in scope of requiring a licence to hire out horses can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/936833/animal-welfare-licensing-hiring-out-horses.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936833/animal-welfare-licensing-hiring-out-horses.pdf)

The recently published *Action Plan for Animal Welfare* demonstrates our commitment to a brighter future for animals both at home and abroad. Our reform programme includes pursuing the licensing of animal sanctuaries and rescue and rehoming centres including for cats, dogs and horses. Defra has been engaging with rescue and rehoming organisations to understand their views and the possible impacts of regulating the sector. Any Proposals to bring forward licensing regulations will be subject to a consultation.

There are currently no plans to license horse breeders or livery yards (which provide stabling and grazing facilities for owners of horses and ponies) from an animal welfare perspective. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 animal owners and keepers are under a legal duty of care for the animals for which they are responsible on a permanent or temporary basis. The 2006 Act is backed up by the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys, and their Hybrids. The Code provides information on considerations to be taken into account before deciding to breed from your horse. It also makes clear that owners are responsible for meeting the horse's need for safe and suitable shelter and pasture, whether this is through a livery yard, rented land or land that you own. The Code can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf)

## ■ Cereals

**Alex Norris:** **[8726]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to adopt the Whole Grain Initiative's definition of whole grain foods for food package labelling.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra committed to reviewing the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998, as they apply in England, following the end of the transition period. The planned review is being scoped now but it will focus on ensuring alignment with retained laws in other overlapping areas, as well as considering requests from industry for additional measures and exemptions. The review will also need to consider any DHSC decisions around folic acid. As part of the review, we will hold a public consultation on policy options. Many of the issues raised by stakeholders to date are technically complex and we expect this review will need sufficient time to consider responses and agree the best way forward.

## ■ Dairy Products and Meat

**Caroline Lucas:** **[7781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the press release of the 6th carbon budget, UK enshrines new target in law to slash emissions by 78% by 2035, published on 20 April 2021, for what reasons the Government does not plan to implement the advice of the Committee on Climate Change for low-cost, low-regret actions for a 20 per cent shift away from meat and dairy products

by 2030 as part of the balanced net zero pathway as part of its policy position on diet change; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We recognise the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions made by the livestock and dairy sectors. In 2019 - the most recent year for which emissions data is available - livestock emissions represented 60% of agricultural emissions (27.9Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e). Evidence shows that plant-based food products are generally less carbon intensive to produce than livestock products. While food choices and improved farming practices have an impact on these emissions, well-managed livestock can also provide environmental benefits such as contributing to protection of soil carbon in existing pastures, supporting biodiversity, protecting the character of the countryside and creating employment for rural communities. We recognise the delicate balance between these outcomes and the potential environmental trade-offs, and will ensure decision-making is evidence led.

Achieving the net zero target is a priority for the Government, and we are developing a range of measures through the Agriculture Act, our future farming policy, our forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper and the 25 Year Environment Plan, all with the aim of enabling farmers to optimise sustainable food production, reduce emissions from agriculture and allow consumer choices to drive those changes.

Part Two of Henry Dimbleby's independent review of the food system will be published in July 2021. It will include a root and branch examination of the food system as it is today and the forces that shape it. The Government has committed to responding to the Review's recommendations in the form of a Food Strategy White Paper within six months of the release of the final report. The Government is committed to developing a food strategy that will support the development of a food system that is sustainable, resilient and affordable, that will support people to live healthy lives, and that will protect animal health and welfare.

■ **Dangerous Dogs: Exemptions**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were on the Index of Exempted Dogs in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales in each of the last 10 years, by breed.

**Victoria Prentis:**

There are currently 3,678 live dogs listed on the Index of Exempted Dogs. The table below indicates the number of these dogs per breed located in England, Scotland, and Wales:

ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	TOTAL
Pit Bull (3503)	Pit Bull (8)	Pit Bull (144)	3655
Dogo Argentino (17)	Dogo Argentino (2)	Dogo Argentino (1)	20

ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	TOTAL
Japanese Tosa (2)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (1)	3
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0
			<b>3678</b>

The Department does not hold information on the number of dogs listed on the Index of Exempted Dogs for each of the past 10 years broken down by breed and by nation. However, the table below indicates the number of dogs per breed located in England, Scotland and Wales that were entered onto the Index of Exempted Dogs in each of the past 10 years.

YEAR	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	TOTAL
	<b>2010</b>	Pit Bull ( <b>666</b> )	Pit Bull ( <b>2</b> )	Pit Bull 676 ( <b>8</b> )
Dogo Argentino ( <b>3</b> )	Dogo Argentino ( <b>0</b> )	Dogo Argentino ( <b>0</b> )	3	
Japanese Tosa ( <b>1</b> )	Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	1	
Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	0	
				<b>680</b>
	<b>2011</b>	Pit Bull ( <b>622</b> )	Pit Bull ( <b>1</b> )	Pit Bull 640 ( <b>17</b> )
Dogo Argentino ( <b>2</b> )	Dogo Argentino ( <b>0</b> )	Dogo Argentino ( <b>0</b> )	2	
Japanese Tosa ( <b>1</b> )	Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	1	
Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	0	
				<b>643</b>
	<b>2012</b>	Pit Bull ( <b>611</b> )	Pit Bull ( <b>3</b> )	Pit Bull 648 ( <b>34</b> )
Dogo Argentino ( <b>2</b> )	Dogo Argentino ( <b>0</b> )	Dogo Argentino ( <b>0</b> )	2	
Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	Japanese Tosa ( <b>0</b> )	0	
Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	Fila Brasileiro ( <b>0</b> )	0	
				<b>650</b>
	<b>2013</b>	Pit Bull ( <b>656</b> )	Pit Bull ( <b>0</b> )	Pit Bull 701 ( <b>45</b> )

YEAR	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	TOTAL
Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	0	
Japanese Tosa (1)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	1	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>702</b>
	<b>2014</b>	Pit Bull (620)	Pit Bull (2)	Pit Bull 656 (34)
Dogo Argentino (1)	Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (1)	2	
Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	0	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>658</b>
	<b>2015</b>	Pit Bull (509)	Pit Bull (1)	Pit Bull 532 (22)
Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	0	
Japanese Tosa (2)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	2	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>534</b>
	<b>2016</b>	Pit Bull (443)	Pit Bull (0)	Pit Bull 463 (20)
Dogo Argentino (1)	Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	1	
Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	0	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>464</b>
	<b>2017</b>	Pit Bull (368)	Pit Bull (1)	Pit Bull 386 (17)
Dogo Argentino (7)	Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	7	
Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	0	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>393</b>

YEAR	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	TOTAL
	<b>2018</b>	Pit Bull (212)	Pit Bull (0)	Pit Bull 225 (13)
Dogo Argentino (3)	Dogo Argentino (1)	Dogo Argentino (0)	4	
Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	0	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>229</b>
	<b>2019</b>	Pit Bull (185)	Pit Bull (0)	Pit Bull 192 (7)
Dogo Argentino (4)	Dogo Argentino (1)	Dogo Argentino (0)	5	
Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	0	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>197</b>
	<b>2020</b>	Pit Bull (119)	Pit Bull (1)	Pit Bull 125 (5)
Dogo Argentino (1)	Dogo Argentino (0)	Dogo Argentino (0)	1	
Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (0)	Japanese Tosa (1)	1	
Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	Fila Brasileiro (0)	0	
				<b>127</b>

## ■ Dogs: Sales

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[8751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to prevent pet shops in England using breeding licences held in Northern Ireland to avoid the ban on third party puppy sales.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK is a world leader in animal welfare, and the Government is committed to cracking down on unscrupulous breeders who breed dogs purely for financial greed at the expense of animal welfare.

Since April 2020, in line with the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (the 2019 Amendment to the 2018 Regulations), pet shops, pet dealers and other commercial pet sellers have

been prevented from selling puppies and kittens in England that they have not bred themselves. This applies in cases where puppies are bred outside of England meaning that a pet shop in England is already prohibited from selling puppies bred in Northern Ireland unless they have bred them themselves.

This addresses welfare concerns associated with puppies and kittens bought and sold by third parties, including the early separation of animals from their mothers and the keeping of puppies and kittens at inappropriate commercial premises.

Local authorities are responsible for licensing a business to determine whether a licence holder has bred the animals they are selling. Our updated guidance to the 2018 Regulations, which has been amended to reflect the changes brought in by the 2019 Amendment, sets out how local authorities might determine whether someone can be said to have bred the animals they are offering for sale. This guidance has been shared with local authority licensing officers who have powers to investigate and enforce breaches of the guidance.

## ■ **Fishing Vessels: Marine Environment**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[8576]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is aware of the fishing method of fly shooting in UK waters; whether his Department has made an assessment of the environmental impacts of fly shooting; and if his Department will make an assessment of the compatibility of fly shooting with the Government's ambition to protect 30 per cent of UK waters by 2030.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Fly shooting, also known as Scottish seining, has been evaluated by Seafish - the public body supporting the UK seafood industry - as having a lower environmental impact than other gear types because it can be operated from lower powered vessels with lower fuel consumption. Details can be found at: [SSC - Scottish Seine — Seafish](#).

## ■ **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[7782]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 18 December 2021 to question 127521, when the planned consultation on implementing biodiversity net gain through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime will be published.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is exploring how a biodiversity net gain approach for major infrastructure projects could best be delivered, and how other policy or legislative levers could be used to support this. To ensure that projects in the pipeline are able to progress and take advantage of the benefits a net gain approach can offer, the Government intends to consult further in due course.

## ■ Nature Conservation

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[7783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that nature recovery opportunities identified by Local Nature Recovery Strategies can be delivered on the ground.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be delivered in several ways, including through biodiversity net gain and the strengthened biodiversity duty introduced in the Environment Bill. Future schemes that reward farmers and other land managers for producing environmental benefits, including Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery, will also be key mechanisms for delivering the opportunities for nature recovery identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies have been piloted in five areas across England. They have tested how Local Nature Recovery Strategies and environmental land management priorities can be developed concurrently, maximising the benefit for the environment and people.

## ■ Origin Marking

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[8757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of geographical indications (GIs) on local economies; and what assessment his Department has made of the effect of GIs on the (a) rate of employment in areas with GIs, (b) median wage in areas with GIs compared to areas without GIs and (c) price stability of GI products compared to similar products without GI status.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Whilst the Government has not undertaken an assessment of the impact of geographical indications (GI) on local economies, we are aware from industry partners that they play an important role in retaining jobs and historically important skills in rural areas. For example, we understand that the Cornish Pasty (protected GI) industry employs 2,000 people and contributes over £65 million to the local economy. The Scotch Whisky Association estimates that more than 10,000 people are directly employed in the Scotch Whisky industry in Scotland and over 40,000 jobs across the UK are supported by the industry which provides £5.5bn in gross value added to the UK economy.

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[8758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with international partners on ensuring the recognition of UK geographical indications in foreign markets; and what steps his Department has taken to ensure that recognition in multilateral trade bodies.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK has successfully signed a number of trade agreements which provide continued protection for iconic UK geographical indications in foreign markets, including with the Andean Community, Canada, Switzerland, Ukraine and Singapore. The UK-Japan Comprehensive Partnership Agreement will also offer new protection for additional UK geographical indications.

We continue to seek the best deal for UK geographical indications in all of our ongoing negotiations with international trading partners and through multilateral trade bodies such as the World Trade Organisation.

**■ Pets: Theft****Luke Pollard:**[\[8732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of pet theft on the welfare of the animals that have been stolen.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This Government is committed to ensuring the welfare of animals and will act to protect them further in all circumstances. The Government's Pet Theft Taskforce has been set up to gather evidence to understand the factors that may be contributing to any rise in pets being stolen and will consider the issue from end to end, with the impact on the welfare of the animals being fully considered as one aspect.

In addition, the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021 (the Act) was granted Royal Assent on the 29 April 2021. This realises the Government's manifesto commitment to increase the sentences available to our courts for cases of animal cruelty. The Act will come into force on the 29 June 2021 providing one of the toughest sanctions in Europe and strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

The Act's new maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine will apply to animal cruelty offences, including causing unnecessary suffering to an animal in the process of stealing it.

**■ Plastics: Packaging****Stuart Anderson:**[\[7940\]](#)

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

**Rebecca Pow:**

Through powers being taken in the Environment Bill, the Government intends to introduce Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging. These measures will place the cost of managing packaging waste on those businesses that place packaged goods on the UK market.

In doing so we will incentivise businesses to think carefully about how they can reduce the packaging they use, design and use packaging that is easily recyclable, and encourage more use of reusable and refillable packaging.

For plastic that is used in packaging, we want more of it to be recycled. Producers will be required to meet higher plastic packaging recycling targets and through our measures that we are consulting on currently for more consistent recycling collections in England, all households and businesses will be able to recycle rigid plastic packaging. We are also consulting on the inclusion of plastic film and flexible plastic packaging in the core set of materials for collection in England.

## ■ **Plastics: Supermarkets**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[7904]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage supermarkets to reduce their use of plastics.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042.

Industry is already taking action on this. The UK Plastics Pact was jointly founded by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the Ellen McArthur Foundation and is supported by the Government. The Pact brings together organisations from across the plastics supply chain, including all the major supermarkets, with four key targets for 2025 that aim to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated. Current Pact business members are responsible for 80% of plastic packaging sold through UK supermarkets.

Through the pact, work has been done to increase the sale of unpackaged products. The WRAP Fresh Produce Guidance was published in November 2019 which includes advice for retailers to help determine if fresh produce can be provided loose.

Alongside supporting voluntary action by industry, the Government is taking regulatory action. For instance, the single-use carrier bag charge, which has led to a 95% reduction in the use of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarkets, was increased to 10p and extended to all retailers on 21 May 2021. This will give greater encouragement to customers to bring their own bags to carry shopping and reduce the volumes of single-use plastic being used.

The Government is also reforming the packaging producer responsibility regulations and developing extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging. EPR for packaging will see packaging producers paying for the waste management costs associated with the packaging that they place on the market. This will ensure producers are thinking about the necessity of any packaging they use. In developing EPR for packaging, we will also take consideration of how EPR for packaging could be used to encourage packaging reuse and refill systems. The Government consultation on EPR for packaging closed on 4 June 2021:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/extended-producer-responsibility/extended-producer-responsibility-for-packaging/>.

## ■ Waste: Recycling

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[7903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department takes steps to ensure that waste sent abroad to be recycled is recycled.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK Government is committed to banning the export of plastic waste for recycling to countries that are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Government will consult on this measure and work is underway to make this happen.

Under the UK legislation on waste shipments, businesses involved in the export of wastes are required to take all necessary steps to ensure that the waste they ship is managed in an environmentally sound manner throughout its shipment and during its recycling.

All waste exports need to be made in accordance with the relevant legislation and we have a system of inspections in place to verify compliance. The Environment Agency mounts targeted inspections at UK ports working with the shipping sector to help detect and prevent illegal waste shipments. Recycling facilities in other countries are permitted and regulated by that country's authorities.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Jim Shannon:**

**[7819]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Japanese counterpart on the disposal of radioactive waste in the Pacific.

**Nigel Adams:**

We respect and agree with the science behind releasing treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi site and believe that it will pose no material risk to people or the environment. We also welcome the continuing close cooperation between the Japanese Government and the International Atomic Energy Agency in this matter. The Foreign Secretary has not discussed this issue with his Japanese counterpart.

### ■ Haiti: Politics and Government

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[8731]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government is providing to the Moise Administration in Haiti for constitutional

reforms, including tackling gender disparities by creating a female political representation quota of 35 per cent at every level.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK sees women's political empowerment, participation and leadership as a critical foundation for girls' and women's broader rights and for making progress on gender equality. The UK is closely following developments in Haiti including the upcoming constitutional referendum. Whilst we are not currently providing direct bilateral support the UK supports the work of the United Nations. This includes that of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and of the UN Special Political Mission (the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti), in their ongoing diplomatic engagement with the Haitian authorities on both the proposed constitutional referendum and elections.

■ **Palestinians: Teachers**

**Christian Wakeford:** [\[8792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK monitors teacher training programmes for teachers in the Palestinian Territories whose salaries are paid for by UK aid.

**Christian Wakeford:** [\[8793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the process of producing the content for the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

**James Cleverly:**

It is essential to have a strong and thriving Palestinian education system to provide opportunities for the next generation. We have been clear that incitement to hatred or violence is unacceptable and has no place in education.

Following the UK's calls for international action, our European partners agreed to lead an independent review. We understand the review is in the final stages. We will study its findings carefully before deciding on any next steps. We remain in close dialogue with our European partners and continue to press for completion and publication of the review as soon as possible.

In financial year 2020/21 we provided £20m in funding to the Palestinian Authority to support the salaries of education workers in the West Bank.

■ **Western Sahara: Human Rights**

**Alan Brown:** [\[8658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2021 to Question 3038, whether he plans to support representations for an independent UN body to monitor human rights in occupied Western Sahara.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined. The UK has consistently supported language in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions which encourages the parties to sustain their efforts to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara and in the Tindouf camps.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **Dental Services**

**Peter Aldous:** [7810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Steele review on NHS Dentistry, what steps he is taking to implement the Dental Transformation Strategy 2020-22.

**Peter Aldous:** [7812]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to promote preventative-focused, patient-centred dental care.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department will work with the British Dental Association and NHS England and NHS Improvement to design proposals that address the key challenges facing the delivery of National Health Service dentistry and encourage a more preventative approach to dentistry.

In addition, Public Health England has published an evidence-based toolkit, 'Delivering Better Oral Health' for dental teams to provide preventive advice and treatment for their patients. Work is underway to review the toolkit and an updated version will be published in the autumn. The toolkit is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention>

■ **General Practitioners**

**Chris Grayling:** [10170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new GPs have entered primary care in the last two years.

**Jo Churchill:**

As of March 2021, there were 536 more full time equivalent doctors working in general practice compared to March 2019.

NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England are working with the profession to increase the general practice workforce in England. This includes measures to boost recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice. A record 3,793 doctors accepted a place in general practitioner (GP) specialty training in 2020/21, against a

target of 3,500. From 2021, the Government has committed to increasing the number of GP training places to 4,000 a year.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ **Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[7892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government has plans to make changes to prevent spent hospital orders under the Mental Health Act from being recorded on patients' Disclosure and Barring Service records.

**Victoria Atkins:**

As the question refers to spent hospital orders, we assume you are referring to hospital orders for an individual detained under the Mental Health Act as part of the disposal for a conviction. Spent criminal records are never disclosed on basic criminal record certificates.

Jobs which require higher levels of trust (such as roles working with children) may be eligible for standard or enhanced criminal record certificates issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service. These checks may also disclose spent convictions and cautions in accordance with disclosure rules. According to the rules, a spent conviction or caution would be disclosed only if: it was imposed within the last 11 years; or it was for a specified offence which is serious, relates to sexual or violent offending or is otherwise relevant for safeguarding purposes; or where a custodial sentence is imposed. Where such convictions are disclosed, the certificates will also include any attached sentences/disposals which could include a hospital order.

Enhanced certificates may also contain other information held by the police if a Chief Officer of police considers it relevant to the role and proportionate for it to be disclosed. In making such a decision, Chief Officers must have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State which makes clear that disclosure of information related to mental health is sensitive and requires careful consideration. Information suggesting a particular risk of harm to others, for example, might be considered appropriate for disclosure. If such information is disclosed, the criminal record certificate should provide sufficient explanation to ensure that the prospective employer will clearly understand the relevance of the information to the application.

The Government considers that the current approach strikes the right balance between public protection and an individual's right to private life.

### ■ **Daniel Morgan Independent Panel**

**Christian Matheson:**

[\[7842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what meetings have been held with her officials on the Independent Panel into the Murder of Daniel Morgan since 1 January 2020.

**Christian Matheson:**[\[7843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received on the Independent Panel into the Murder of Daniel Morgan since January 1st 2020.

**Kit Malthouse:**

As sponsoring Minister for an inquiry, it is not uncommon to receive queries and correspondence regarding the progress of an inquiry. Representations with regards to the content of the report would be a matter for the Independent Panel.

The Home Secretary is kept up to date on the work of the Panel and her responsibilities by her officials, and meets with them when required.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Victims****Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[7999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking with the Secretary of State for Justice to support victims of domestic abuse.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This government is committed to tackling domestic abuse, which is why we recently passed the landmark Domestic Abuse Act, to support and protect all victims of domestic abuse. Alongside this, this year we will publish a domestic abuse strategy that will go beyond the implementation of the Act to help transform our response to domestic abuse; to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need.

We know that victims of domestic abuse may feel particularly vulnerable at this time, which is why last year the Government launched our #YouAreNotAlone awareness raising campaign to signpost support available. The campaign has reached over 30 million UK adults and has been seen by over 130 million followers on social media.

In January, we also launched the 'Ask for ANI' Codeword scheme to enable domestic abuse victims to seek victim focussed support, including engagement with specialist victim support services and the police as necessary. Over 5,000 pharmacies across the nation are now participating in the scheme, and the scheme has been used by over 60 victims and survivors.

We have provided unprecedented new funding to victim support services to ensure that they have the capacity to provide support to victims and adapt their operational capacity in light of the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic. To that end we have awarded £27 million in additional funds to support domestic abuse services last financial year alone, comprising £25 million from the government's £76 million in emergency funding for the most vulnerable in society, and an extra £2 million from the Home Office in April 2021 to bolster the capacity of domestic abuse organisations affected by the pandemic.

In November 2020 the Ministry of Justice announced a further £11 million towards a range of services offering practical and emotional help – allowing domestic abuse

and specialist rape organisations to recruit more staff, adapt to remote counselling methods during the pandemic and keep helplines open for longer.

In 2021-22, the Ministry of Justice will provide just under £151m for victim and witness support services. This includes an extra £51m to increase support for rape and domestic abuse victims, building on the emergency funding from this financial year to help domestic abuse and sexual violence services meet Covid-driven demand. Of this funding, £27 million will go to creating more than 700 new posts for Independent Sexual Violence and Independent Domestic Abuse Advisers helping us to meet demand for support from victims.

## ■ Gender Based Violence

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

**[7998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle violence against women and girls.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This government is committed to tackling domestic abuse, which is why we recently passed the landmark Domestic Abuse Act, to support and protect all victims of domestic abuse. Alongside this, this year we will publish a domestic abuse strategy that will go beyond the implementation of the Act to help transform our response to domestic abuse; to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need.

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## ■ Hate Crime: Ethnic Groups

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[11690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of reported instances of hate crime towards people of Indian heritage in the UK in the last (a) 3 and (b) 12 months.

**Kit Malthouse:**

*[Holding answer 10 June 2021]:* The Home Office collects and publishes statistics annually on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales by five centrally monitored strands: race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender. Information has not previously been collected on the race or ethnicity of victims but will be during 2021/22 and published in due course.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Neil Coyle:** [\[8617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to support EU nationals to access work and essential services in the event that their EU Settlement Scheme application is still pending after the 30 June 2021 deadline.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[8619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish further guidance on the Right to Work and rent checks for people with pending EU Settlement Scheme applications; and whether that guidance will include information on how those undertaking the checks can signpost eligible people to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[8622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an employer could be subject to a criminal penalty for failing to dismiss an EU national if that employee started a period of employment after 1 July 2021 and the employer knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the employee has not yet applied for EU Settled Status.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[8623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a landlord could potentially be subject to a civil penalty for failing to check and subsequently evict a person who is an EU national who rented accommodation before and remained in the

same tenancy agreement after 1 July 2021 and the landlord has not sought confirmation of whether the tenant has secured their status under the EU Settled Status scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

Right to work and rent checks for EEA citizens will change at the end of the grace period – which ends on 30 June 2021.

Employers and landlords will maintain a continuous statutory excuse against liability for a civil penalty if the initial checks were undertaken in line with legislation and published guidance at the time. Employers and landlords will not be required to conduct retrospective checks on existing employees and tenants if the initial check was undertaken on or before 30 June 2021.

From 1 July, EEA citizens and their family members will require an immigration status in the UK, in the same way as other foreign nationals. They can no longer rely on an EU passport or national identity card to prove their right to work or rent.

Those with an outstanding application to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) will be able to rely on their Certificate of Application as proof of eligibility to access their right to work or rent when this is verified by the Home Office checking services.

The Department for Work and Pensions and HMRC will also be able to determine an individual's status using existing services with the Home Office. Consistent with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the rights of someone who has made an application to the EUSS by the 30 June 2021 deadline will be protected while the outcome of the application (and of any appeal against the decision) is pending.

We will be updating our guidance and communicating with employers and landlords in the coming weeks to set out the support available, and ensure they are clear on the steps they should take from 1 July.

**Neil Coyle:**

**[8618]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that EU nationals living in the UK and working in health and social care will have secured their EU settled status by the 1 July 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

As of 30 April 2021, 5.4 million applications had been received to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), and 4.9 million grants of status have been made, delivering on the government's promise to secure the rights of millions of Europeans in UK law for years to come.

A comprehensive range of communications activity has been delivered to date to increase awareness of the EUSS across sectors and audience demographics including EEA and Swiss national key workers and those working in the health and social care sectors.

Communications activity includes extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, and, since 2019, nearly £8million spent on targeted UK advertising on social media, website banners, catch up TV and radio, to ensure EEA and Swiss

citizens are aware of the scheme and supported to apply. The latest £1.95million burst launched in May and will run to the end of June.

The Home Office has provided up to £22million in grant funding to a current network of 72 organisations providing bespoke support to vulnerable and hard to reach EU citizens and their family members eligible to apply to EUSS.

Workers in the social care sector were given early access under the pilot phases of the scheme. Communications to reach eligible health & social care workers via their employer have been ongoing since the scheme's launch with hundreds of engagement events delivered alongside the provision of an employer toolkit, equipping organisations with the information required to support their staff.

This has included a bespoke event for NHS employers, and with a number regional strategic migration and enterprise partnerships. NHS employers, Scottish Social services and Wales Social care also sit on EUSS advisory groups. We have recently worked with DHSC to develop an internal update for NHS staff, and with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to include an update on EUSS in their bulletin to care sector employers.

We continue to work closely with the Department for Health and Social Care, and Local Authorities to provide support and materials to eligible individuals in the sector.

**Neil Coyle:**

**[8621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an EU national will need to prove pre or settled status to enter the UK if they are not entering for the purpose of visa free travel; and what documentation is required to allow them to enter.

**Kevin Foster:**

Free movement between the EU and the UK ended on 31 December 2020. EU nationals seeking to enter the UK for reasons other than visa free travel must be eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme or use the new UK points-based immigration system.

EU citizens have until 30 June 2021 to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme if they were resident in the UK before 31 December 2020. When seeking to enter the UK, EU citizens are not routinely asked to prove they have applied for or been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme, but systems are in place to allow border officials to make such checks where necessary.

For those who are not eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme, we require evidence of an individual's right to live and work in the UK. We encourage all EU nationals to check whether they need a visa before they travel and the prevailing health regulations in relation to travel to the UK, set by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, which they must also comply with.

Information for EU citizens about the points-based immigration system is available at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/the-uks-points-based-immigration-system-information-for-eu-citizens](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-uks-points-based-immigration-system-information-for-eu-citizens)

## ■ Migrants

**Neil Coyle:** [\[8624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of pending applications for a change of conditions to lift the No Recourse to Public Funds restriction, as outlined in the Immigration and Protection data: Q1 2021.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[8625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference for her Department's transparency data, Immigration and Protection data: Q1 2021, published on 27 May 2021, for what reasons there has been an increase in pending applications for change of conditions to lift No Recourse to Public Funds conditions.

**Chris Philp:**

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) constantly monitor intake volumes and will deploy resources flexibly to address increases in the volume of Change of Conditions applications.

Following a peak in quarter 2 of 2020, intake has reduced significantly during the ensuing quarters.

The published data is a 'snapshot' of work in progress at the point of publication. The 'pending' cases for the most recent quarter can be expected to have been mostly completed in the next quarter, as comparison with the previously published data reveal; the 'pending' in Q4 2020 showing as 539 in the February data release has reduced to 39 in the latest release.

Although intake in the most recent quarter has increased by 8%, the data shows that output has increased by 7%, reflecting the dynamic deployment of resource.

The number of applications decided as a proportion of the number of cases received over the published periods has remained consistent at 96% for the most recent data table against 96.8% for the previous table.

## ■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[11558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals similar to the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Bill.

**Kit Malthouse:**

*[Holding answer 10 June 2021]:* This Government considers existing legislation covers a wide range of offences which criminalise threatening or abusive behaviour intended to harass, alarm or distress a person, and which would apply in cases of violence towards people whose work brings them into contact with members of the public. These offences cover the full spectrum of unacceptable behaviour from using abusive language to the most serious and violent offences.

While the sentencing of offenders is extremely important, reporting, investigating and making sure there are consequences for these crimes is much more likely to drive down the numbers of incidents.

## ■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[10163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the prevalence of people from covid-19 red list countries seeking to enter the UK via third countries; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

The United Kingdom has some of the most stringent border measures in the world including implementing a three-test regime and requiring all those travelling from Red or Amber List countries to self-isolate for 10 days. Travellers from Red List countries must quarantine in a designated Managed Quarantine Hotel.

Every essential check introduced – from testing to the Passenger Locator Form – is helping to reduce the risk of new coronavirus variants making it into the UK.

Border Force assesses routes used to travel into the UK. The vast majority of people identified as having travelled indirectly from a red list country are compliant with health measure requirements.

Border Force works with the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Transport to identify passengers who are attempting to circumvent the managed quarantine requirements and has successfully done so on previous occasions.

All arrivals into the UK are checked, both by carriers and Border Force, to ensure they are complying with requirements. Further checks are made after entry to make sure people are quarantining when required and further action may be taken by the Isolation Assurance and Compliance Service and the police. Breaches can incur fines of up to £10,000.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

## ■ **Parliament: Ivory**

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[10642\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the Commission has made of the number of ivory items owned by or collated in the Houses of Parliament.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

In total, there are 21 documented items made of ivory or containing ivory that are owned by the Houses of Parliament.

There are 18 accessioned objects documented within the Parliamentary Heritage Collections. Of these 12 are small objects from the Parliamentary Art Collection made between the 17th and 19th centuries. The remaining six are items of 19th century historic furniture or fabric which contain small amounts of ivory decoration.

There are two accessioned items documented in the Parliamentary Archives which contain ivory. These are a Book of Common Prayer containing decorative ivory crosses and a set of ink stamps with ivory handles. There are no accessioned items documented in either the House of Lords Library or House of Commons Library made of, or containing, ivory.

A non-accessioned First World War book of remembrance in the House of Lords includes an ivory Tudor rose in the binding. There may be other non-accessioned items containing ivory in the Houses that have not yet been identified.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Affordable Housing: South East

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[8705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to increase affordable housing in the South East.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and is investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, unlocking a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing. Economic conditions permitting, our new Programme will provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, including in the South East.

### ■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[8527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to publish research from the British Research Establishment on trigger height thresholds.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The research is advancing and is currently scheduled to conclude at the end of 2021.

### ■ Planning

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[8631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to publish the Government's response to the Planning for the Future consultation.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The consultation on the Planning for the Future White Paper closed in October 2020, and received around 44,000 responses – demonstrating just how important this is to people.

Given the number of responses, we are taking time to carefully consider the valuable feedback we received. We will publish the Government response to the White Paper ahead of introducing the Planning Bill to Parliament.

**Recreation Spaces****Dr Kieran Mullan:****[8000]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to protect green spaces.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The National Planning Policy Framework acknowledges the importance of green and open space and makes clear that where new development is proposed an appropriate amount of public space should be provided. It is also set out that existing open space should not be built on unless there is evidence to demonstrate that it is no longer required, or it will be replaced by equivalent or better provision at a suitable location.

The Framework also sets out how both local and neighbourhood plans allow communities to identify and protect green areas which they consider to be of particular importance, by formally designating these as Local Green Space.

In addition, the National Model Design Code, which we have recently consulted on, sets out proposals for how nature and green spaces should be woven into the fabric of our villages, towns and cities, providing benefits in terms of health and wellbeing, biodiversity, climate and flood mitigation.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****Overseas Trade: Faroe Islands****Imran Ahmad Khan:****[8784]**

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

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

My Department has been implementing the United Kingdom-Faroe Islands Trade Agreement, which secures a trading relationship that was worth £503 million in 2020 and maintains preferential trading conditions for British businesses.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Japan

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[7969\]](#)

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 Japan.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) entered into force in January 2021. The Government's analysis shows that in the long run, the CEPA could increase UK-Japan trade by £15.7 billion compared to a situation where there was no agreement. CEPA goes beyond the EU-Japan deal, with enhancements in areas such as digital and data, financial services, food and drink, and creative industries.

In March 2021, the Department for International Trade launched a four-month trade mission to support businesses to trade with Japan. As of the 27 May 2021, 2,000 UK and Japanese companies have been involved, and over 250 UK businesses have been introduced to Japanese buyers.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Singapore

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[7980\]](#)

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 Singapore.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK is Singapore's top European trading partner and Singapore is the UK's largest trade partner from ASEAN. The UK-Singapore bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) came into force on 1 January 2021. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, when the FTA took effect, the Government has been engaging with UK businesses to promote its benefits and is currently focusing on its implementation. Furthermore, the UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (DEA), whose negotiations the Government intends to launch soon, and the UK's proposed accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), of which Singapore is a founding member, are also expected to boost bilateral trade flows.

## ■ Overseas Trade: South America

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[7965\]](#)

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

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Last year, my Department for International Trade successfully negotiated and brought into force the United Kingdom-Andean countries trade agreement, covering Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. Peru is a founder member of the Comprehensive and

Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership also, and is supportive of our planned accession.

The United Kingdom recently co-chaired trade dialogues with both Colombia and Peru, in which we agreed to work together to boost trade in key sectors, such as services, digital, clean energy and agri-food. As part of our government-to-government deal with Peru, British businesses are working on a £1.7 billion reconstruction of Peruvian public services, following significant damage caused by the climate cycle El Niño in 2017.

#### ■ Overseas Trade: South Korea

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[7982\]](#)

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 South Korea.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which entered into force on 1 January 2021, forms the basis of an ambitious new trading partnership between the United Kingdom and South Korea.

The UK also has a Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) with South Korea, led by my Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade. This helps to develop further the positive trade and investment relationship and compliments the opportunities the FTA presents.

#### ■ Overseas Trade: Ukraine

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[8783\]](#)

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

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Total trade between the United Kingdom and Ukraine was valued at £1.3 billion in 2020. HM Government is taking steps to increase the volume of trade with Ukraine, including in areas such as defence and security, agri-tech, food and drink, green technologies and aerospace, as well as through the promotion of inward investment and the resolution of market access barriers.

Bilateral trade is underpinned by the United Kingdom-Ukraine Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement, offering preferential trading terms for British and Ukrainian businesses, which was signed on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 by my Rt Hon. Friend, the Prime Minister. On the same day, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding between 'UK Export Finance', Britain's official export credit agency, and the Government of Ukraine, underlining our £2.5 billion capacity to support exports to Ukraine and agreeing areas of priority for cooperation.

## ■ Service Industries: Trade Agreements

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[7994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to promote professional business services in free trade agreements.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK is a world leader in professional and business services. In 2019, the UK exported £63 billion of professional and business services (PBS), with a trade surplus of £34 billion.

To support the success of this important and diverse sector, the Department for International Trade is seeking ambitious commitments in its free trade agreements (FTAs) on cross-border trade in services, investment, mobility, and digital trade, which will reduce trade barriers, and provide certainty and transparency for UK professional and business service suppliers.

The Government is also using FTAs to foster regulatory dialogue and collaboration across all PBS sectors. This can help reduce administration and costs for UK professionals and firms seeking to supply services overseas.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Australia

**Tim Farron:**

[\[7771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to work with the Leader of the House to bring any proposed trade deal with Australia to the House to be scrutinised before it is signed.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government has put a suite of enhanced scrutiny arrangements in place to allow for appropriate scrutiny by Parliament. This includes:

- publishing negotiating objectives and economic scoping assessments before starting negotiations;
- regular statements to Parliament;

At the conclusion of negotiations, there will be opportunity for scrutiny of the final deal, including time for the relevant Select Committees and the Trade and Agriculture Commission to produce their reports on the deal. Parliament can resolve against ratification of a treaty under the scrutiny processes set out under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. Any legislative changes required to give effect to the free trade agreement will need to be scrutinised and passed by Parliament in the usual way before ratification of the agreement can take place.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[7991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of a free trade agreement with Australia on Crewe and Nantwich constituency.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department's economic analysis, published on 17 June 2020, seeks to identify the potential scale of the long-term additional benefit to the UK from having a deal with Australia. This analysis suggested the North West could be one of the regions expected to benefit most from a UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Clothing is one of the North West's top goods exports to Australia, and this increased from 2019 to 2020. Liberalisation of tariffs on clothing (currently up to 5%) and reducing other non-tariff barriers to trade should further benefit this industry.

Likewise, another of the North West's top exports to Australia, automotives, could also benefit from the removal of tariffs (currently up to 5% on road vehicles) and other non-tariff barriers to trade.

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

**Mr David Davis:****[8538]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of a free trade agreement with Australia on (a) the East Riding of Yorkshire and (b) Haltemprice and Howden constituency.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's economic analysis, published on 17 June 2020, seeks to identify the potential scale of the long-term additional benefit to the UK from having a deal with Australia.

Yorkshire and the Humber's top goods export to Australia, general industrial machinery, equipment and machine parts, saw an increase from 2019 to 2020. Liberalisation of tariffs on these products (currently up to 5%) and reducing other non-tariff barriers to trade should further benefit this industry, and others.

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

**Mr David Davis:****[8539]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that (a) farmers and (b) food producers in (a) East Riding of Yorkshire and (b) Haltemprice and Howden constituency can benefit from a free trade agreement with Australia.

**Greg Hands:**

An ambitious free trade deal with Australia will benefit businesses and producers across the UK – this will include greater access for UK agri-food goods to the Australian market through the removal of tariffs.

A deal with Australia is also a gateway to joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a high-standards free trade agreement of 11 Pacific nations, which will mean lower tariffs for British exports to those markets. By 2030, two-thirds of the world's middle class will be in Asia, which is

creating unheralded new export opportunities for British farming. This is where the future opportunity lies for UK farmers.

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

#### ■ Trade Agreements: Malaysia

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[7973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of securing a bilateral trade agreement with Malaysia.

**Greg Hands:**

On 1 February 2021 the Government submitted its notification of intent to begin the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) accession process, of which Malaysia is a signatory. This is the first formal step towards accession that aims to deepen the United Kingdom's access to the fast-growing markets and major economies of the future, including Malaysia.

#### ■ Trade Agreements: New Zealand

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [\[7992\]](#)

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

**Greg Hands:**

The Government has completed four rounds of negotiations since the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations were launched last June. The fifth round of negotiations began on the 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Overall, negotiations have been positive, pragmatic and productive. The Government has made good progress and is now negotiating on all areas of the FTA.

The UK and New Zealand both remain eager to make further progress, with a view to working towards an agreement in the coming months.

## JUSTICE

#### ■ Council Tax: Non-payment

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[8547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were handed down a prison sentence due to non-payment of council tax in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

Non-payment of council tax is not a criminal offence and cannot attract a custodial sentence. However, as a last resort, a magistrates' court has the option to commit an individual to prison for non-payment.

Before a magistrates' court commits someone to prison for failure to pay their council tax, it must have issued a "liability order" and the local authority must have (at least) tried and failed to take control of the debtor's goods and sell them to recover the debt. Councils have additional powers of enforcement under a liability order, including deduction from earnings, deduction from benefit, charging orders on the property, and bankruptcy. If a council applies for committal to prison, the court must inquire into the debtor's means, and the council must satisfy the court that there is no other effective method of collection and that failure to pay is due to wilful refusal or culpable neglect. This is to prevent persons who are genuinely unable to pay their council tax from being committed to prison. Where that is the case, courts have the power to remit the debt.

Data on the number of non-criminal admissions to prison for non-payment of council tax, covering the period 1990 – 2020, can be viewed in Table A2.12 at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/983553/Receptions\\_2020.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/983553/Receptions_2020.ods)

## ■ Prisoners: Mental Illness

**Janet Daby:**

**[7939]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what specialist training is given to staff in prisons to handle individuals in custody who are experiencing mental health crises; what the procedure is for assessing the need for use of physical force on those individuals; and whether expert opinions from mental health professionals are sought in dealing with those cases.

**Alex Chalk:**

This government takes the mental health needs of prisoners very seriously and to keep them safe and well, prison officers must have the skills, knowledge and confidence to offer support, alongside healthcare professionals.

Improved mental health awareness training has been developed as part of Prison Officer Entry Level Training and refresher training for existing staff. We are currently developing an improved modular safety training package. This includes an enhanced mental health training module, building on the introductory module for staff supporting individuals with complex needs. Resources also include a suicide and self-harm learning tool, developed in partnership with Samaritans, and a range of guidance relating to known risk factors.

Any use of force must be necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the seriousness of the circumstances. A clinical assessment must take place to determine whether the prisoner has capacity. If the prisoner has been assessed as not having capacity, then the Mental Capacity Act 2005 makes provision for the person to be treated and, if necessary, for force or restraint to be used. When considering the options, healthcare/clinical staff will make the decision and liaise closely with prison staff on the level and type of restraint that might be used.

## ■ Television Licences: Non-payment

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[8549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) people in total and (b) women were sent to prison for the non-payment of a magistrates' court fine arising from a conviction for evasion of payment of TV licence fees in 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

In 2020, there were no admissions into prison associated with failing to pay a fine in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in England and Wales.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Coronavirus: Qatar

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[10251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria were used to inform the decision include Qatar on the covid-19 red list for travel.

**Robert Courts:**

The decision to add Qatar to the red list on 19 March was made by Ministers, following data showing an increased risk of importation of the Beta variant of concern first identified in South Africa.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) produces risk assessments of countries and territories. Decisions on Red, Amber or Green List assignment and associated border measures are taken by Ministers, who take into account the JBC risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors. Key factors in the JBC risk assessment of each country include genomic surveillance capability, COVID-19 transmission risk and Variant of Concern transmission risk. A summary of the JBC methodology has been published on GOV.UK, alongside key data that supports ministers' decisions.

As with all our coronavirus measures, the Government keeps the red list under constant review and our priority remains to protect the health of the UK public.

### ■ Electric Scooters: Speed Limits

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[10283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to prevent the import of modified (a) e-scooters, (b) micro scooters and (c) e-bikes that are capable of being driven at speeds in excess of the permitted speed limit for public roads in the UK.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In the UK, e-scooters are treated like any other motor vehicle under the Road Traffic Act and are subject to laws requiring them to be built and used safely, meaning that users need to have insurance, driving licences, number plates, and helmets. The law was not drafted with e-scooters in mind, and in practice users of e-scooters will find it a challenge to comply with these legal requirements. Offences relating to driving

standards and speeding also apply. Ministers from the Department have written to micromobility retailers, and will do so again, reminding them of the law regarding the sale of e-scooters. It is in everyone's interest that consumers can make properly informed decisions when buying these products about regulation and guidance being provided to retailers.

Electric cycles which can offer power assistance at speeds exceeding 15.5 mph, do not, in the Department's opinion, comply with the relevant Regulations and therefore would also be considered to be a motor vehicle.

The law is very clear and there are existing penalties for improper use. Enforcement of offences relating to unlawful use of motor vehicles 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.

#### ■ Northern Rail and TransPennine Express

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[10593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to policy paper entitled Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail, published by his Department on 20 May 2021, whether Transport for the North's existing powers in respect of (a) Northern and (b) TPE rail passenger services will be (i) maintained and (ii) increased when contracts transfer to Great British Railways.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Under the Rail North Partnership, Transport for the North (TfN) and the Department for Transport jointly manage the Northern and Transpennine contracts.

New partnerships between Great British Railways and local and regional government will give greater control to towns, cities and regions. Further detail on the involvement of local leaders in rail and other transport services and the levers available to them will be set out in the levelling up white paper in due course.

#### ■ Parking: Pedestrian Areas

**Emma Hardy:** [\[10598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 25 March 2021 to Question 173157, when he plans to publish the results of his Department's pavement parking consultation, which closed on 22 November 2020.

**Emma Hardy:** [\[10599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 25 March 2021 to Question 173157, how his Department collected the views of people with protected characteristics, such as blind and partially sighted people as part of the recent pavement parking consultation, which closed on 22 November 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department is analysing the high volume of responses to ensure that all views are captured, and Ministers will be carefully considering the consultation findings before deciding the way forward.

We will publish a response to the consultation in due course and it will be available to view at: [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking).

During the consultation, the majority of Departmental staff were working from home to help control the spread of COVID-19. We therefore sought to encourage all replies to the consultation by online survey or by email where this was an easier solution. We worked with disability groups including RNIB on accessibility issues and, in addition, to the online survey, we provided an 'Easy Read' version, a fully interactive 'Large Print' response form, as well as an audio file. We sincerely hope that the majority of people wishing to respond did have access to the internet, such as from a library or with help from friends or family.

**■ Railway Stations: Visual Impairment****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[10579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 4014 on Railway Stations: Visual Impairment, whether he will publish data on facilities at stations in a database or other accessible format.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Rail Delivery Group are currently responsible for collating station data which is published on the National Rail Enquiries website:

[https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations/default.aspx](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/default.aspx)

**■ Railways: Staff****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[10582]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff are employed by (a) Network Rail and (b) the Train Operating companies currently; and what estimate he has made of the number of staff that will be employed by those organisations in 2023.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

According to Network Rail's Annual Report and Accounts published in 2020, there were around 42,000 staff employed at the organisation in 2019/20. The Office of Rail and Road's key statistics regarding Train Operating Companies, also published in 2020, indicates there were around 62,000 full-time equivalents across the operators in Great Britain over the same period. No estimates have been made as to the potential number of staff that will be directly employed by Network Rail or the individual Train Operating Companies by 2023.

**■ Railways: Tickets****Caroline Lucas:** [\[10316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 4576, if he will make it his policy to bring forward publication of the final prices for flexible season tickets; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The new flexible season tickets will go on-sale on 21 June, and become available for use on 28 June. Tickets will go on sale a week in advance to provide passengers enough time to consider the best option for them before planning travel.

A new season ticket calculator will be available for passengers to check the best value option for their travel plan.

**TREASURY****■ Business Premises: Taxation****Rachael Maskell:** [\[10497\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to take steps to ensure that non-UK resident landlords of commercial property publish transparent data on their tax affairs that are accessible to the public to scrutinise.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has no plans to require non-UK resident landlords of commercial property to publish data on their tax affairs.

**■ Business: Taxation****Bridget Phillipson:** [\[10348\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) headcount and (b) full-time equivalent number of staff employed in HMRC's Large Business Directorate in each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[10349\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide information on the total spend on compliance activities by HMRC's Large Business Directorate in each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[10351\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide information on the average (a) headcount and (b) full time equivalent number of staff working on each active enquiry undertaken by HMRC's Large Business Directorate in each year between 2014-15 to 2019-20.

**Jesse Norman:**

The full-time equivalent number of staff working for HMRC's Large Business Directorate was as follows:

31 MARCH 2015	2,022
31 March 2016	2,137
31 March 2017	2,392
31 March 2018	2,338
31 March 2019	2,367
31 March 2020	2,395

The Large Business Directorate manages the tax compliance of the UK's 2,000 largest and most complex businesses through a Customer Compliance Manager (CCM) model. CCMs are highly trained specialists, who lead teams of highly skilled tax professionals and other specialists to scrutinise these most complex and potentially high-risk business customers.

HMRC deploy their Large Business Directorate teams flexibly and their compliance professionals are likely to work on a number of different customer enquiries and tax issues at any one time. It is therefore not possible to say how many staff work on each individual Large Business Directorate enquiry.

**Bridget Phillipson:****[10350]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide information on the number of (a) active enquiries, (b) enquiries initiated and (c) enquiries closed by HMRC's Large Business Directorate in each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20.

**Jesse Norman:**

The information requested has been provided in the table below:

YEAR	ACTIVE ENQUIRIES AT EACH 31/3	ENQUIRIES INITIATED DURING THE YEAR	ENQUIRIES CLOSED DURING THE YEAR
2014-15	3722	3041	3135
2015-16	3875	3251	3112
2016-17	3617	2825	3109
2017-18	3302	2845	2667
2018-19	3263	1993	2551
2019-20	3220	1940	1986

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[10352\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide information on the (a) number and (b) volume of enquiries undertaken by HMRC's Large Business Directorate in respect of businesses of which the registered location of the parent group is in the (a) UK Crown dependencies and (b) British overseas territories, broken down by territory and dependency in each year between 2014-15 to 2019-20.

**Jesse Norman:**

Information has been provided in the table below:

		RISKS CLOSED DURING EACH YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH
2014/15	Crown Dependencies	24
	British Overseas Territories	54
2015/16	Crown Dependencies	25
	British Overseas Territories	50
2016/17	Crown Dependencies	33
	British Overseas Territories	30
2017/18	Crown Dependencies	16
	British Overseas Territories	43
2018/19	Crown Dependencies	28
	British Overseas Territories	31
2019/20	Crown Dependencies	25
	British Overseas Territories	31

Data in respect of individual dependencies and territories has not been provided, in order to protect taxpayer confidentiality.

Any information that could identify individual taxpayers, including aggregate information concerning a small number of taxpayers, is exempt under [Section 18 Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005](#).

■ **Corporation Tax**

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[10347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide information on compliance yield from activities relating to ensuring the proper payment of corporation tax in respect of the work of HMRC's Large Business Directorate in each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Large Business Directorate compliance yield in respect of Corporation Tax is below:

YEAR	CT YIELD (£M)
2014-15	3,453
2015-16	3,650
2016-17	3,577
2017-18	2,882 (includes Petroleum Revenue Tax)
2018-19	2,608
2019-20	2,582

### ■ English Language: Education

**Clive Lewis:**[\[10520\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to extend full business rates relief to all English Language Teaching (ELT) schools in (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

**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.

### ■ Free Zones: Vat Zero Rating

**John McDonnell:**[\[10145\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the revenue impact in 2022-23 of introducing zero-rate contributions on secondary class 1 contributions for employees at freeport tax sites.

**Jesse Norman:**

The National Insurance contribution relief will be important in supporting the Government's objectives for the Freeports programme, which includes regeneration through job creation. The Government has considered the costs of the tax reliefs that will be granted across each of the eight English Freeport locations. However, as a

result of these tax reliefs applying only in tax sites agreed and confirmed by Government, estimates of their cost will be dependent on the final locations once agreed.

Bidders were required to submit initial proposals for their tax sites as part of their bids. The Government will outline the process for confirming tax sites in due course and expects to score the costs of tax reliefs, including zero-rate contributions, at the next fiscal event. These costings will undergo the usual scrutiny from the Office for Budget Responsibility.

**John McDonnell:**

**[10146]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of employees that will benefit in 2022-23 from the introduction zero-rate contributions on secondary class 1 contributions for employees at freeport tax sites.

**Jesse Norman:**

The National Insurance contribution relief will be key in supporting the Government's objectives for the Freeports programme, which includes regeneration through job creation. The Freeports tax sites have not yet been confirmed and so the Government is currently unable to give an accurate estimate of the number of employees that benefit in 2022-23 as this will depend on how many employers use the relief and will vary depending on a number of circumstances, including the location of the Freeport tax site.

The Government will publish an updated Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN), when further information is available following confirmation of the tax sites.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Exports

**Ben Lake:**

**[10569]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will publish a breakdown of the (a) destination, (b) use, (c) type of product and (d) volume of Welsh steel exports in each year between 2010 and 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection and publication of data on UK imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC release this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics (OTS), which is available via their dedicated website ([www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com)).

Unfortunately the data collected does not enable HMRC to specifically identify 'Welsh steel'. However, HMRC are able to provide data on steel products allocated to Wales under their Regional Trade in Goods Statistics (RTS) methodology.

The resultant data can be viewed via: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/rts-custom-table/?id=069c86fb-747d-4420-8124-0fddc365a663>.

Notes:

1. The RTS data provides a breakdown of imports and exports by regions of the UK, to other countries. Trade for an individual business is allocated to a region based on the proportion of its employees employed in that region. For that reason it is possible that trade in steel by businesses considered to be based in Wales, may appear in the RTS under other regions of the UK other than Wales (or vice-versa). A full description of how UK trade is allocated to a region can be found in the RTS Methodology paper:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/697012/RTS\\_Methodology\\_Revision.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/697012/RTS_Methodology_Revision.pdf).
2. The RTS uses the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) which classifies goods more broadly. Steel exports have been defined here as 'SITC 67 – Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material, Iron and Steel'.
3. RTS data only describes the physical movement of goods between regions of the UK and other countries (not between the UK regions themselves).

HMRC's RTS methodology was significantly changed to improve the allocation of region to a business. This affected data from 2013. Consequently, data for the period 2010 to 2012 is not comparable and so has not been provided.

HMRC trade statistics data does not provide any commentary on the 'use' of the exported items.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Electronic Government

**Alyn Smith:**

**[10649]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have Government Gateway accounts for (a) personal and (b) business use.

**Jesse Norman:**

There are currently 73.1 million active credentials/accounts registered with Government Gateway; a single unique user may hold several accounts for use in interactions with HMRC and/or other Government departments.

69.4 million credentials are linked to HMRC services and are profiled across the user types below:

- Tax Agents: 1.0 million
- Individuals: 20.9 million
- Organisations: 47.5 million

The remaining 3.7 million credentials are associated to OGDs (not HMRC) and HMRC do not hold a record as to whether these are used for personal or business use.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Department for Work and Pensions: Complaints****Kirsten Oswald:****[10426]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the communication to customers of her Department's complaints processes.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Departments complaints process which considers formal complaints about our service can be found on Gov.uk

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/complaints-about-the-department-for-work-and-pensions>)

As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to make changes to our complaints model to allow staff to be deployed to support processing claims and payments. From 9 July 2020, the Department triage complaints to prioritise vulnerable claimants who may be at risk, and those with benefit payment issues for example.

We continue to look into all complaints as quickly as we can and, as part of the triage process, we write or call those customers where there may be a delay in answering their complaint.

We are reviewing the approach we have taken throughout the pandemic as part of developing the future complaints operating model.

**Kirsten Oswald:****[10432]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what measures are in place to ensure that up-to-date information is publicly available on the (a) number and (b) outcome of complaints to her Department about poor customer service.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department defines a complaint as, 'any expression of dissatisfaction about the Department's service which is not resolved by operational staff as normal business.'

At the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Department publishes transparency data, which sets out the cumulative total of customer complaints received about our services. In addition, data is published which confirms the number of complaints received - and accepted for investigation - by the Independent Case Examiner (ICE).

Data in relation to complaint numbers can be viewed by accessing the following link to [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-dwp-financial-year-2020-to-2021>

The Department does not routinely publish statistics in relation to complaint outcomes.

The Department also publishes complaint volume data – and information about how customer feedback is used to improve our level of service - in our Annual Report and Accounts publication. This provides details of the full complaint journey which includes the outcomes of ICE and Ombudsman investigations. The reports can be viewed by accessing the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020>

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Correspondence

**Damien Moore:** [\[10624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that correspondence sent to her Department is responded to within 20 working days.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department aims to respond to correspondence from hon. Members and their constituents within 20 working days wherever possible. Where the matters raised are complex it may take longer, but we aim to keep any delay to a minimum.

The Cabinet Office publishes information about individual Department's performance in responding to hon. Members; the most recent information will be published in due course.

## ■ Disability: Employment Schemes

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[12294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the recommendations from the Social Security Advisory Committee in its recent report on the quality of her Department's engagement with disabled people when designing or evaluating programmes that affect them.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I am grateful to the Committee for their report and pleased to see that our sustained efforts to engage with disabled people have been recognised. We are planning to respond to the Committee in the coming weeks.

## ■ Employment: Vacancies

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[11713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of job vacancies in the labour market in (a) the UK and (b) Wales as at 7 June 2021.

**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.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**John Penrose:**

[\[10306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, further to the reply of 14 May 2021 to the letter from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of North Somerset Citizens' Advice Bureau, (a) for what reason his Department was unable to provide figures of the number of claimants whose award has ended and were waiting for their new claim to be processed, (b) when he will provide them, (c) what estimate he has made of the number of claimants in this position; and (d) what steps he is taking to resolve the issue.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible and are treating as a priority advance claims, where a person's previous fixed term award has ended. Where a person is found to still be eligible for Personal Independence Payment their award is backdated to the point they claimed or when their previous award ended, so no one loses out financially.

In relation to part (a) of your question, the information requested in respect of the numbers of claimants whose award has ended and were waiting for their new claim to be processed is not in the public domain; new statistical information is not released via Ministerial Correspondence.

In relation to parts (b) and (c) the information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

## ■ **Social Security Benefits**

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[10430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what quality assurance processes her Department has in place for the administration of (a) universal credit, (b) jobseekers allowance and (c) employment support allowance.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Quality Assurance Framework sets out the Department's quality controls

There are three tiers of assurance within the Framework, with each tier aspiring to report lower levels of error as a means of supporting continuous improvement.

Tier 1 provides an assurance at local centre level and focuses on known areas of highest risk of error or complexity

Tier 2 measures official error and gives an independent assurance of financial accuracy via a review of randomly selected cases.

Tier 3 assurance constitutes a formal review of cases for financial error in relation to fraud, customer error and official error.

These assurances apply to all product lines, including UC, JSA and ESA. Wherever possible, award types identified as being high risk are selected for assurance ahead of any payment being made.

DWP reports Tier 3 assurance via its published Monetary Value of Fraud Error statistics. The latest published version can be found via this link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system-financial-year-2020-to-2021-estimates>

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** **[11622]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 3996 on Social Security Benefits, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that maintaining the benefit cap policy represents value for money to the public purse; and if she will make a statement.

**Mims Davies:**

The benefit cap restores fairness between those receiving working age benefits and taxpayers in employment. Households can still receive benefits up to the equivalent salary of £24,000, or £28,000 in London. Outside London, around 4 in 10 households have net earnings from employment of less than £20,000. In London, around 4 in 10 households earn less than £23,000.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** **[11623]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 3996 on Social Security Benefits, whether her Department has undertaken a cost/benefit analysis of the benefit cap (a) in general and (b) which has included (i) police costs in responding to domestic abuse reports, (ii) local authority costs for temporary housing, (iii) the administration costs of Discretionary Housing Payments and (iv) additional costs to other public services; and whether there are any other policies and programmes which are delivered by her Department where the associated annual costs to the public purse are unknown.

**Mims Davies:**

(a) DWP has published four impact assessments of the benefit cap, each one including a cost/benefit analysis. The first two relate to the introduction of the benefit cap. The second two relate to the introduction of a lower, tiered cap. They can all be found here:

<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/impact-assessments/IA12-003.pdf>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/220178/benefit-cap-wr2011-ia.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220178/benefit-cap-wr2011-ia.pdf)

<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006.pdf>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/548741/welfare-reform-and-work-act-impact-assessment-for-the-benefit-cap.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/548741/welfare-reform-and-work-act-impact-assessment-for-the-benefit-cap.pdf)

(b) These cost benefit analyses do not include the specific costs listed in (i) to (iv). The funding of all DWP policies is set out at the time they are introduced and, where relevant, updated at subsequent fiscal events. Documentation on all past fiscal events is set out at Gov.uk, and by the Office for Budget Responsibility where relevant. The most recent documentation can be found at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/965777/Budget\\_2021\\_policy\\_costings\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965777/Budget_2021_policy_costings_.pdf) and <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2021/> respectively.

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Complaints

**Kirsten Oswald:** [10428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints about poor customer service have been lodged in respect of applications for (a) universal credit, (b) jobseekers allowance and (c) employment support allowance in each of the last three years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department does not measure complaints as described in the question and to determine this request, we would need to examine each individual case, which the Department considers to be cost prohibitive to provide.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [10429]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints about poor customer service lodged in each of the last three years for (a) universal credit, (b) jobseekers allowance and (c) employment support allowance have been about delays in departmental responses.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department does not measure complaints as described in the question and to determine this request, we would need to examine each individual case, which the Department considers to be cost prohibitive to provide.

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Marsha De Cordova:** [12293]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that disabled people are proactively and directly engaged in the public consultation on the forthcoming health and disability Green Paper.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

It is vital that the voices of disabled people are at the centre of health and disability policy development. Over the past 18 months I have personally led a series of events in which I have heard directly from disabled people about their lived experiences with

the benefits system. We will continue this direct engagement with disabled people up to and following the publication of the Health and Disability Green Paper.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

**Chris Stephens:** [\[11582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on plans to roll out yellow card warnings in place of immediate benefit sanctions.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department committed to look at processes to give claimants a written warning, instead of a sanction, for a first sanctionable failure to attend a Work-Search Review. Before making an assessment of the merits of extending such a system we are under-taking a series of small-scale Proof of Concepts of this warning system.

The increase in claimants due to Covid has led to a pause in this testing in order to prioritise support for claimants during this difficult time.

■ **Universal Credit: Widowed Parents Allowance**

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[11645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of discounting Widowed Parent's Allowance as income when calculating universal credit entitlement.

**Guy Opperman:**

No such assessment has been made. We have no plans to change the treatment of Widowed Parents' Allowance.