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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

■ Artificial Intelligence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[13182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has a strategy to help ensure that the UK becomes a world leader in (a) research and development, (b) regulation and (c) safe adoption of artificial intelligence.

Amanda Solloway:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform our lives, unlock high-skilled jobs, and increase productivity. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced in his Ten Tech Priorities that the UK will be building on our work in AI and publishing our National AI Strategy later this year.

In particular, the AI Strategy will focus on

- Growth of the economy through widespread use of AI technologies;
- Ethical, safe and trustworthy development of responsible AI;
- Resilience in the face of change through an emphasis on skills, talent and R&D.

The AI strategy will align with the Government's plans to boost R&D investment, helping our AI pioneers to accelerate bringing new technologies to the market.

The independent Regulatory Horizons Council (RHC) has been appointed to scan the horizon for new technological innovations and provide the Government with impartial, expert advice on the regulatory reform required to support its rapid and safe introduction, while protecting citizens and the environment.

The RHC is to provide recommendations for fusion energy; unmanned aircraft (incl. drones); gene-based technologies and medical devices and have identified provisional future work including AI in Healthcare and Space and Satellites.

■ Bereavement Leave

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[12954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of the provision of bereavement leave to (a) mothers and (b) partners who have experienced a (i) miscarriage and (ii) stillbirth.

Paul Scully:

We recognise that losing a child at any age can be deeply upsetting. We encourage employers to provide appropriate support to women who have suffered a miscarriage or stillbirth.

In April 2020, we legislated to give parents who lose a child under the age of 18 a right to take up to 2 weeks off work in the 56 weeks following the death of their child. This right extends to parents of babies stillborn after 24 completed weeks of pregnancy. It is too early to conduct an evaluation of this policy.

Individuals who do not feel able to return to work following a miscarriage may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay while off work. All employees are also entitled to 5.6 weeks of Annual Leave a year and many employers also offer 'Compassionate Leave'. We encourage employers to respond sensitively to each individual's specific needs.

■ **Certification Officer: Finance**

Andy McDonald: [\[15256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the annual budget for the Certification Officer for the financial year starting on 1 April 2022.

Andy McDonald: [\[15257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the expected budget is for the Certification Officer for the financial year 2021-22.

Andy McDonald: [\[15258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the budget was for the Certification Officer for the financial years beginning 1 April (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Certification Office cost: £883,370 in the year commencing 1 April 2017; £1,103,037 in the year commencing 1 April 2018; £1,097,132 in the year commencing 1 April 2019; and £1,079,812 in the year commencing 1 April 2020.

The Certification Office budget for the year commencing 1 April 2021 has not yet formally been allocated. The Certification Office anticipates that the total cost of the office will be approximately £1,100,000.

The Government's latest estimate is that the office will cost approximately £1,150,000 in the year commencing 1 April 2022. This figure includes an adjustment to account for the costs associated with implementing the additional powers granted to the Certification Officer by the Trade Union Act 2016, which are due to come into force from April 2022.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to what extent their Department makes use of artificial intelligence in the implementation of its policies;

and how much was spent from their Department's budget on artificial intelligence in each of the last three years.

Amanda Solloway:

There are a number of projects currently being undertaken or considered by the Department.

BEIS Analysts use machine learning techniques, under the umbrella of artificial intelligence, where appropriate as part of analysis supporting policy development.

Machine Learning projects are being

(i) undertaken:

- Identifying the location of industrial strengths;
- Pilot for targeting communications about business support;
- Categorising internal documents by subject.

(ii) considered:

- Project to understand the labour market through analysing job adverts;
- A pilot for organising internal processes;
- A pilot for predicting economic impacts using real time indicators.

The Department's expenditure on artificial intelligence in each of the last three years will only be obtainable at disproportionate cost.

■ **Developing Countries: Climate Change**

Chris Law:

[\[13974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the Tomorrow's Cities programme on the ability of vulnerable communities in Kenya, Nepal, and Ecuador to protect themselves from flooding and fires caused by climate change.

Amanda Solloway:

The challenging financial situation we face due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary reduction in the UK's aid spending target from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. This means making difficult decisions when it comes to prioritising how we spend aid money to deliver the most impactful outcomes.

BEIS published its R&D ODA allocations for financial year 2021/22 on May 27th. Our R&D ODA spend has been allocated in line with the priorities of the Strategic Framework for UK ODA, as outlined by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in his letter to the Chair of the International Development Committee on 2nd December 2020, whilst prioritising those projects with the most value-for-money and honouring existing legal commitments. Specifically, one of these Strategic Framework priorities is climate change, as you have outlined, which is why this Government has allocated

£11.6bn from 2021-25 to support climate change activities in developing countries through our International Climate Finance portfolio.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting international research partnerships, and supporting the UK research sector. Our commitment to research and innovation has been clearly demonstrated by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget announcement of increasing investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22.

We have been working with UKRI, and all our Global Challenges Research Fund Delivery Partners, to manage the financial year 2021/22 ODA allocations. UKRI have written to all impacted award holders setting out the next stage of the review of ODA funding this year, and to explore options for individual programmes. Full details of this process have been published on the UKRI website, and further information about the impact on the countries you refer to can be found on the Tomorrow's Cities website.

■ Energy: Meters

Sir Alan Campbell:

[\[13860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timescale is for the roll out of smart meters that work with any energy supplier.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Energy suppliers are installing second generation smart meters as the default option across Great Britain. These meters are connected to the Data Communications Company's national smart metering communications network, so are compatible across energy suppliers from the point of installation.

The Government has confirmed that a new four-year policy framework with fixed annual installation targets for energy suppliers will commence on 1 January 2022 to drive the consistent, long-term investment needed to achieve market-wide rollout.

■ Energy: Prices

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[13921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of exclusive tariffs on price comparison websites on competition in the energy retail market.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The offering of exclusive tariffs by price comparison companies enables them to exert competitive pressure on suppliers to offer consumers better energy deals. The ability to offer exclusive tariffs and the removal of the requirement to show whole of the market tariffs by price comparison companies followed the Competition Markets Authority's recommendation in its market study of digital comparison tools in 2017. Consumers can access the exclusive tariffs via the price comparison companies' websites or telephone comparison service.

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[13922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of potential effect of loyalty penalties in the energy retail market on consumers.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is tackling the loyalty penalty experienced by households who do not shop around for their energy supply, which the Competition and Markets Authority has estimated, creates a £1.4bn average annual detriment to those consumers. We legislated for a price cap in 2018, which saves households £75-£100 a year on average. Ofgem, the sector regulator, is working to make it easier and quicker for households to switch energy deal. As set out in our Energy White Paper, the Government will introduce an opt-in switching scheme and trial out-out switching to help more households get a better deal on their energy.

■ **Events Industry and Weddings: Coronavirus**

Justin Madders:

[\[13984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing sector specific support for those in the wedding and events industry for the remainder of 2021.

Paul Scully:

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to businesses, including those in the wedding industry, which we keep under regular review.

■ **Food: Production**

Ian Lavery:

[\[901415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to prevent the use of fire and rehire practices in the food production and processing sector.

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.

We asked Acas to conduct an evidence-gathering exercise to improve our evidence base. We welcome Acas' report on this work which was published on 8 June.

The Acas report demonstrated that there are different views on whether the practice can ever be justified. For some of the organisations consulted by Acas, it is never acceptable. For others, in its most legitimate form 'fire and rehire' is a route for

employers to avoid redundancies and business failures, after negotiations have been exhausted.

I have asked Acas to produce better, more comprehensive, clearer guidance to help employers explore all the options before considering 'fire and rehire' and encourage good employment relations practice.

■ Fuel Cells: Manufacturing Industries

Jane Hunt:

[\[13252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of hydrogen fuel cell manufacturing capacity in the UK; and what steps he is taking to increase investment in hydrogen fuel cell usage.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK has strengths in electrochemical technologies. The 2019 Energy Innovation Needs Assessment identified that the UK has established research expertise and potential to establish a competitive fuel cell sector, capturing significant market share. British companies are already exporting this technology to markets in Europe and South East Asia. BEIS is working with industry to further assess these core strengths and potential opportunities for UK companies to support the domestic and global hydrogen 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.

The Government is providing a comprehensive framework of support for research, innovation and commercialisation of fuel cells. Four fuel cell projects have been funded through the BEIS Energy Entrepreneurs Fund, with a total grant of £2.2m, and will be in scope of the upcoming Longer Duration Energy Storage programme as part of the Net Zero Innovation Portfolio. Government is also supporting the uptake of fuel cell electric vehicles, expansion of hydrogen refuelling infrastructure and development of fuel cells for automotive through the £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme, the £2m Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Fleet Support Scheme, and the Advanced Propulsion Centre and Automotive Transformation Fund, which have already committed over £38m in grant towards 16 projects with a total value of almost £85m. In addition, the Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub will support a shared understanding on the role of hydrogen in a decarbonised transport system and put UK industry and technology at its forefront. Fuel cells will be a key technology explored. It will build partnership working across the region, improving co-ordination and cross learning of strategic R&D infrastructure investments at scale, co-locating transport end-use with hydrogen production and refuelling.

■ Heating: Housing

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [[13934](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that heating engineers are adequately trained in the installation of heat pumps.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is working closely with industry and the education sector to ensure that high-quality training is available for heat pump installers. This includes training for new heating engineers, and for existing heating engineers who do not yet have heat pump training.

As part of the Green Homes Grant Skills Competition, the Government awarded more than £6 million to support training for tradespeople delivering green home energy improvements, including heat pump installations.

We are also supporting the industry-led development of new heat pump upskilling courses for existing heating engineers. By the end of 2021, we expect industry to have the capacity to upskill thousands of heating installers per year.

Furthermore BEIS, together with the Department for Education, is also working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to ensure that apprenticeships and T-Levels contain high quality heat pump training. Additionally, we are working with the Association of Colleges to ensure that further education providers are aware of future needs for heat pump skills, and to understand barriers to providing relevant training so that they can be better addressed.

■ Hydrogen

Alan Brown:

[[13124](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of setting a green hydrogen generation target of 1GW by 2030; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan confirmed our aim, working with industry, for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for use across the economy. The UK has expertise and assets to support both electrolytic and CCUS-enabled hydrogen production and we expect the levels of low carbon hydrogen production from different technologies that make up our 5GW ambition to depend on market developments in the 2020s.

Our ongoing work with stakeholders suggests there is a strong pipeline of electrolytic hydrogen projects ready to deploy in the 2020s, building on our existing investment in research and innovation to ensure we can achieve the scale up in low carbon hydrogen production necessary to meet our future energy needs.

The forthcoming UK Hydrogen Strategy will set out further detail on the role of different hydrogen production technologies in meeting our 5GW ambition. This

ambition will be supported by a range of measures, including a £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund, and our preferred long term, sustainable business model, which we will finalise in 2022. We will be consulting shortly on these measures, alongside publication of the UK Hydrogen Strategy.

■ Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund

Martyn Day: [\[13145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the uptake has been of funding from the Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund to date.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Since the Medicines & Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund (MDMTF) launched on 7 April this year, we have seen a high level of interest from the sector with a total of 80 registrations visible on the online application portal as of 11th June 2021. The application deadline for the MDMTF is not until 30 June. Once received, applications will be appraised before grant offers are made.

■ Nitrogen Trifluoride

Caroline Lucas: [\[13025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to amend the definition of greenhouse gases in the Climate Change Act 2009 to include Nitrogen Trifluoride.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government does intend to amend the definition of greenhouse gases in the Climate Change Act 2008 to include nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃) and will seek to bring forward legislation to do so within the next year.

In accordance with UNFCCC international guidelines, NF₃ has been reported in the UK greenhouse gas inventory since 2013. NF₃ has also been in scope of UK international emission reduction targets since 2013, including the second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol (2013-2020) and the UK Nationally Determined Contribution (2030).

■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus

Kenny MacAskill: [\[15398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to review his Department's guidance for close contact services in England entitled Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19), updated on 18 May 2021, that reading materials are replaced frequently; and whether that guidance will be updated when step 4 of the covid-19 roadmap is implemented.

Paul Scully:

We continue to keep the [guidance](#) for working safely during COVID-19 in close contact services under constant review. Guidance will be updated in advance of step 4.

Kenny MacAskill:[\[15399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the efficacy of the evidential basis for guidance on frequently replacing newspapers and magazines in section 5.2 of his Department's close contact services guidance entitled, Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) for England at the same time as evidence for lifting legal covid-19 restrictions is reviewed.

Paul Scully:

We continue to keep the [guidance](#) for working safely during COVID-19 in close contact services under constant review. Guidance will be updated in advance of step 4.

■ Pyramid Selling: Coronavirus**Helen Hayes:**[\[15330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the growth in recruitment for multi-level marketing brands since March 2020.

Helen Hayes:[\[15331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the recruitment practices of multi-level marketing brands during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Hayes:[\[15332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to protect people who have experienced financial hardship as a result of aggressive recruitment by multi-level marketing brands.

Paul Scully:

It is a criminal offence to persuade someone to make a payment to a scheme by promising benefits from getting other people to join the same scheme (Fair Trading Act 1973 section 120(3)).

Similarly, the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) prohibit unfair and aggressive marketing tactics towards consumers.

If individuals believe there has been a breach of these Regulations, they should contact the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133, www.citizensadvice.org.uk/.

■ Renewable Energy: Seas and Oceans

Alan Brown:

[\[13123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of setting an electricity generation target of 1GW by 2030 for marine renewables; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As outlined in the recent Energy White Paper, there is no single optimal mix of technologies to decarbonise electricity generation. Renewable technologies will make a critical contribution to meeting our 2050 net zero commitment.

Targets can be useful in giving certainty to sectors with long investment horizons, however we do not believe that government should prescribe the proportion of generation that will come from all specific technologies; rather the role of government will be to enable the market to deliver the levels of deployment required whilst minimising both emissions and system costs.

Marine renewables could have a role in long-term decarbonisation but will have to reduce costs to compete with other renewable technologies.

■ Restart Grant Scheme: Weddings

Justin Madders:

[\[13985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the restart grant scheme for businesses in the wedding industry.

Paul Scully:

The £5 billion Restart Grant scheme announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr 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.

Strand One of the Restart Grants aims to support non-essential retail with grants of up to £6,000. Strand Two is to support hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses, with grants of up to £18,000. The higher amount is in recognition that these sectors have been allowed to open at a later date and are likely to be more severely impacted by remaining restrictions.

The Department does not hold sector or subsector level data, however we have released a breakdown of Restart Grant funding allocations and payments by Local Authority area which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

■ Seabed: Bomb Disposal

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his timeframe is for the completion of the fourth phase of his Department's investigation of deflagration as a method of unexploded ordnance clearance; what assessment he has made of the potential harm caused by explosions of unexploded ordnance to the marine environment; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognise the potential for significant impact of underwater noise from unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance on vulnerable marine species and is taking active steps to manage and reduce the risk. Two phases of a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) funded project to characterise and contrast the acoustic fields generated by UXO clearance using high order detonation and using low-order deflagration have been completed and reported on. A third phase is now almost complete, further improving the information base and assessment of the clearance options.

Further research is now required to determine if the low-order deflagration and similar techniques are transferable to the offshore marine setting where partially-buried and decades-old explosives and variable environmental conditions can pose greater challenges for successful low-order clearance operations. The fourth phase of BEIS funded research is currently planned around several proposed UXO clearance campaigns. The trials at sea aim to characterise the resulting noise and chemical contaminant releases in the marine environment and to determine whether the technologies are safe and effective. This work is scheduled to take place over the summer and autumn of 2021 and is expected to report in Q1/2 2022.

■ Summertime

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[12953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of making daylight saving time permanent.

Paul Scully:

The Government believes that the current daylight-saving arrangements represent the optimal use of the available daylight across the UK. We do not believe there is sufficient evidence to support changing the current system of clock changes, including for travel, tourism and energy usage.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Young People

John McNally:

[\[13111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to ensure young people are consulted on plans to promote climate action and a green recovery from the covid-19 pandemic ahead of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Achieving our net zero target must be a shared endeavour. As we work to kickstart our economy and building back greener from the pandemic, we are setting out bold policies in place. For instance, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan brings together £12 billion of government investment to support up to 250,000 green jobs by 2030. It is green jobs such as these, that many young people have expressed a preference to work in.

Global appetite for climate action has never been bigger and young people play a vital role in harnessing this appetite to drive forward real-world action. This is why we have set up an International COP26 Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council, so that we can hear the views of young people. In addition, our dedicated COP26 youth engagement team continue to meet with diverse young climate leaders to involve them in our planning for COP26.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[13868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential economic effect on the wedding industry in the event that covid-19 restrictions are extended for another (a) two and (b) four weeks beyond 21 June 2021.

Paul Scully:

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to businesses, including those in the wedding industry, which we keep under regular review.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that, from 21 June, there will no longer be a maximum number cap for attendees. The number of guests will be determined by how many people the venue or space can safely accommodate with social distancing measures in place.

Justin Madders:[\[13982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with wedding industry representatives on the outcome of the test events in Liverpool; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing the measures used at those test events to permit larger weddings to take place.

Paul Scully:

Information provided by the Liverpool test events is contributing to the Events Research Programme and helping us draw conclusions on how to bring about the return of larger events, including weddings, after Step 4.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that, from 21 June, there will no longer be a maximum number cap for attendees. The number of guests will be

determined by how many people the venue or space can safely accommodate with social distancing measures in place.

Justin Madders: [\[13983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the scientific evidential basis is for the Government's policy on covid-19 restrictions on weddings.

Paul Scully:

The roadmap has been informed by the latest scientific evidence from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its working groups on the pace and sequencing of reopening.

Justin Madders: [\[13986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 restrictions on the wedding industry; and what discussions his Department has had with wedding industry representatives on the potential implications for that industry of extending the roadmap out of covid-19 lockdown.

Paul Scully:

BEIS Ministers and officials meet with representatives of the sector-led UK Weddings Taskforce on a regular basis to discuss the challenges faced by the sector and how best to support it through the pandemic.

■ Wind Power

Alan Brown: [\[13121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of setting a 2030 renewable electricity generation target for onshore wind; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Renewable technologies will make a critical contribution to meeting our 2050 net zero commitment, alongside firm low carbon power such as nuclear and gas or biomass generation with carbon capture, usage and storage, and a significant increase in flexibility.

As outlined in the recent Energy White Paper, there is no single optimal mix of technologies to decarbonise electricity generation. Targets can be useful in giving certainty to sectors with long investment horizons, however we do not believe that government should prescribe the proportion of generation that will come from all specific technologies; rather the role of government will be to enable the market to deliver the levels of deployment required whilst minimising emissions at a low overall system cost.

Achieving net zero will require increased deployment across a range of technologies, including onshore wind. Whilst the Government has not set specific 2030 targets for onshore wind, we recognise that achieving our 2050 net zero target will require

increased deployment across a range of renewable technologies, including sustained growth of onshore wind. This is why we announced on 2 March 2020 that onshore wind and other established renewable technologies such as solar PV will be able to compete in the next Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation round. The round will open in December 2021 and aim to deliver up to double the renewable capacity of last year's successful round.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alan Brown:

[\[13122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of doubling the floating offshore 2030 target from 1GW to 2GW; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

One of the key priorities of this Government is putting in place policies to support a significant growth of offshore wind to 2030 and beyond. Within this, we are committed to supporting the development of floating offshore wind, as reflected by our ambitious target of 1GW of floating wind by 2030.

Floating offshore wind will be eligible to bid as a separate technology in the next Contract for Difference allocation round, which will open in December 2021.

This approach will provide the foundation for investment in a sustainable, competitive UK-based supply chain.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Prime Minister: Freedom of Information

Jack Dromey:

[\[15205\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department operates a red, amber and green rating system for categorising Freedom of Information requests according to their presentational sensitivity.

Julia Lopez:

The Cabinet Office does not operate a rating system for Freedom of Information requests. All FOI requests are treated exactly the same, regardless of who the request is from.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Northern Ireland****Johnny Mercer:**[\[13143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much public money has been spent in support of soldiers going through inquest or criminal proceedings in Northern Ireland 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.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Gambling: Video Games****Carolyn Harris:**[\[14177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to bring forward regulatory proposals on Loot Boxes in response to the Loot Box consultation in 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport launched a call for evidence in September 2020 to examine issues and concerns relating to loot boxes. The call for evidence closed in November 2020 and we received more than 30,000 responses.

We continue to evaluate the full scope of the evidence gathered from responses to the call for evidence. Possible solutions, preferred actions, and a summary of the findings from the evidence, including considerations around regulatory proposals, will be set out in the Government's response to the call for evidence. The response will be published in the coming months.

EDUCATION**■ Department for Education: Artificial Intelligence****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[14042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, to what extent their Department makes use of artificial intelligence in the implementation of its policies; and how much was spent from their Department's budget on artificial intelligence in each of the last three years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department uses elements of automation, robotics, and machine learning, although much of the work remains experimental. Most of the automation that has been developed is for internal use and is aimed at improving operational processes

across the Department, not directly to aid implementation of policies. Automation and robotics work is used to reduce the administrative burden brought about from back office processes and the processes involved in exchanging data and information with providers, employers, and other Government Departments. Machine learning is used as a technique to inform an evidence base. Neither our robotics, automation, or machine learning work are used in isolation to make decisions and do not drive decisions or actions directly or in an automated fashion.

■ Sports: Young People

Paul Howell:

[\[14078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to extend the PE and sport premium for the 2021-22 academic year; what his timeframe is for extending the School Games Organisers contracts; and if his Department will work with (a) Go Well and (b) other organisations to ensure the long-term future of PE and sport for young people in school and outside formal education.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is aware of the importance of giving schools as much notice as possible of future funding and has confirmed that the Primary physical education (PE) and sport premium will continue at £320 million for the 2021/22 academic year. Schools will also be permitted to carry forward any unspent PE and sport premium funding from the current academic year to ensure that this is spent to benefit primary pupils' physical education, school sport, and physical activity recovery.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has confirmed that School Games Organisers are now fully funded for the 2021/22 financial year. Funding beyond that point will be subject to future Government Spending Review decisions.

The Government has committed to provide an update to the School Sport and Activity Action Plan this year. It is working closely with sport organisations through the school sport and activity sector forum which represents over 50 organisations. The Department for Education and DCMS ministers recently hosted a roundtable with representatives of the forum to discuss the Government's long-term approach to PE and school sport and the role they can play in supporting education recovery. Schools have flexibility to work with organisations to support the delivery of high-quality PE and sport to their pupils. It is up to schools to decide whether to use their Primary PE and sport premium to pay for the sort of support offered by Go Well.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that higher education students who have moved between home and university since receiving their first dose of the covid-19 vaccination will be able to access their second dose.

Caroline Lucas:

[13911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to (a) collect information on whether incoming international students starting at university in the UK in September 2020 have (i) been vaccinated against covid-19 before arrival and (ii) require a second dose and (b) ensure those students have effective and timely access to vaccination appointments as required.

Michelle Donelan:

Students can book vaccination appointments via the National Booking Service and will have the option to book their second vaccination appointment at a different location to that of their first. This includes students who receive their first vaccination via their GP practice. The National Booking Service allows individuals to view, cancel and rebook their appointments. This is also the case for students who receive their first dose through a GP in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, but who reside in England at the time of their second dose.

Information about the National Booking Service can be found here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/vaccinations/national-booking-service>.

Vaccination is not currently a requirement for entry into the UK. However, we encourage all international students to receive a vaccine, either in a different country before arriving for term, or in the UK once they arrive.

International students in the UK are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine for free, regardless of their nationality or immigration status. International students in England can receive the COVID-19 vaccine when they become eligible.

While students are encouraged to register with a GP to access the vaccine, they can request to book COVID-19 vaccination appointments as an unregistered patient through a local GP practice.

When students have entered the UK having had their first vaccination they should receive the same vaccine for their second dose, if this is available and provided that they are eligible. If the vaccine they received for their first dose is not available in the UK, the most similar alternative should be offered.

■ **Students: Fees and Charges**

Charlotte Nichols:

[14072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to partially refund the tuition fees of university students in response to covid-19 disruption to the academic year 2020-21.

Michelle Donelan:

I want to thank all higher education (HE) staff for their tireless work to ensure that students do not have to put their lives or their academic journeys on hold. This government recognises that this has been an enormously challenging period and I am grateful to universities and other providers for their sustained commitment to supporting students. We are working with the sector to make sure all reasonable

efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has been clear we expect universities to continue delivering a high-quality academic experience and help students to achieve qualifications that they and employers value. Universities are expected to maintain quality and academic standards and that the quantity of tuition should not drop.

Universities and other HE providers are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees within maximum fee limits set by regulations.

Whether or not an individual student is entitled to a refund of fees will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between the provider and student. Students do have rights, and it is for them to decide whether to seek to exercise these, whether it be through the provider's internal complaints system, third party adjudication organisations or courts.

If students wish to be refunded, they should first raise this with their university through their internal complaints procedures. If they are unsatisfied with the outcome, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

The government has already announced that maximum fees in the 2021/22 academic year will remain at £9,250 for a standard full-time course. We also intend to freeze the maximum tuition fee caps for the 2022/23 academic year to deliver better value for students and to keep the cost of higher education under control, the fifth year in succession that maximum fees have been frozen.

We recognise that, in these exceptional circumstances, some students may face financial hardship. The Department for Education has worked with the Office for Students to clarify that providers are able to use existing funds, worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020/21, towards hardship support. We have also made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers this academic year (2020/21).

■ Teachers: Training

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[12956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including the climate emergency and ecological crisis in teaching training courses.

Nick Gibb:

It is vital that young people are taught about climate change, which is why it is covered in the science and geography National Curricula at Key Stages 1 to 4 and 1 to 3 respectively. This National Curriculum is mandatory in all state maintained schools, whilst academies are required to follow a broad and balanced curriculum as exemplified by the National Curriculum.

Trainee teachers starting their training from September 2020 onwards will benefit from at least three years of evidence based professional development and support.

This starts with initial teacher training (ITT), based on the new ITT Core Content Framework (CCF), followed by a new two year induction supported by the Early Career Framework reforms which are being rolled out nationally from September 2021.

The CCF sets out a mandatory minimum entitlement for trainees on ITT courses. The CCF describes the fundamental knowledge and skills that all new entrants to the profession need to effectively teach and support all children. It is not intended to be a full curriculum for ITT courses and it remains for individual institutions to design a coherent and well sequenced curricula appropriate for the subject, phase, age range and needs of the children that trainees will be teaching. These will include, where appropriate, content on climate change. Courses must be designed so that trainee teachers can demonstrate that they meet all the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level including Standard 3 'Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge'. Standard 3 is also clear that teachers should be able to 'demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum area', which may include, where appropriate, content on climate change.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Carbon Emissions

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[13266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce emissions caused by agriculture sector.

Victoria Prentis:

The Prime Minister has been clear that tackling climate change is a priority for this Government. Since 1990, emissions from agriculture have reduced by 13%. Today, agriculture accounts for around 10% of the UK's total GHG emissions. Achieving the net zero target is key for the Government, and we are developing a range of measures to address it through the Agriculture Act, our future farming policy, the 25 Year Environment Plan, and our response to Henry Dimbleby's Independent Review of the food system and national food strategy review. All of these are aimed at enabling farmers to optimise sustainable food production, reduce emissions from agriculture and allow consumer choices to drive those changes.

We are also introducing three schemes that reward environmental benefits: The Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. Together, these schemes are intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and our commitment to Net Zero emissions by 2050, while supporting our rural economy. Through these schemes, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering public goods, including adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

The Clean Growth Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan both set out a range of specific commitments to further reduce emissions from agriculture, including through

environmental land management, strengthening biosecurity and control of endemic diseases in livestock, and encouraging use of low emissions fertilisers.

■ Air Conditioning and Heating: Trifluoroacetic Acid

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [[13936](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the risk to groundwater and drinking water from trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) and trifluoroacetate resulting from refrigerants used in air-conditioning and in heat pumps.

Rebecca Pow:

Trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) is one of a group of thousands of substances collectively called poly- and per-fluorinated substances (PFAS), which are highly persistent in the environment. As a group they are being considered under a risk management options analysis under UK chemical regulation (UK REACH). The Environment Agency (EA) also considers TFA as part of its priority and early warning system for chemicals.

We are aware of some concerns raised about TFA and trifluoroacetate in relation to the breakdown of certain refrigerants, in particular hydrofluoro-olefins (HFOs). HFOs are used increasingly as replacements for hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) due to their much lower Global Warming Potential.

HFCs are powerful greenhouse gases and their use is being phased down. Defra is reviewing the legislation covering HFCs to ascertain whether we can go further in support of the UK's net zero target. This will include assessing the adequacy of existing leak prevention, detection and repair measures, as well as the possibility of reducing further the use of HFCs.

The 2018 UN Montreal Protocol Environmental Effects Assessment Panel (EEAP) report concluded there was minimal risk to human health or the environment from TFA from HFOs used as refrigerants. However, we continue to monitor the latest scientific assessments and will take on board their conclusions, including as part of our review.

Activities with the potential to impact upon the quality of groundwater are regulated through the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (EPR). The EPR provide for ongoing supervision and control by the EA to ensure that groundwater activities are only permitted to operate where the risks to groundwater are well understood and mitigated. The EA does not currently monitor TFA in groundwater.

Refrigerants used in ground source heat pumps are designed and installed to be contained within closed loop systems having no connection to the surrounding environment. Should any evidence show that systems have leaked, the EA has powers to serve notices requiring remediation of any impacted groundwater, surface water or soils.

Drinking water quality is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The Drinking Water Regulations require that, in order to be considered “wholesome”, drinking water must not contain any substance at a level which would constitute a potential danger to human health.

The topic of PFAS substances is not new. The Drinking Water Inspectorate has provided guidance to water companies since 2009 and this has recently been updated to reflect current knowledge. The guidance requires water companies to ensure these chemicals are adequately considered in their risk assessments. Should the EA find evidence to suggest that the closed loop systems have leaked, it will inform relevant water companies of any potential risk, and the water companies will consider initiating monitoring for the chemicals at any of their works where appropriate.

■ **Animal Welfare: Standards**

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[13265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase animal welfare standards.

Victoria Prentis:

The importance of a secure food supply chain founded upon high-welfare farming, to conserving and protecting wild animals, animal welfare has never been more important.

On 12 May, Defra published the Action Plan for Animal Welfare setting out the Government's plans on animal welfare for this Parliament and beyond. The document provides a high-level overview of more than 40 policy reforms we intend to tackle covering farm animals, pets, sporting animals and wild animals.

Now we have left the EU and our transition period has ended we have the opportunity to go further than ever in protecting our animals. In areas that were previously under the jurisdiction of EU law we can now more freely make our own reforms and fulfil our manifesto commitments on animal welfare.

To enact these plans the Government has an ambitious programme of legislation. We have taken our first steps with the introduction of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill and the introduction of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. We intend to legislate further in an Animals Abroad Bill. Secondary legislation on many of the policy areas set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare will also be introduced in the coming months. Non-legislative work will be progressed in parallel. Where we have committed to gather further evidence ahead of introducing any changes we will work closely with stakeholders and the public on this.

■ Animals: Coronavirus**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[12957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of developing a vaccine to prevent covid-19 in animals; and what steps his Department has taken to prevent covid-19 transmission among animals.

Victoria Prentis:

We are aware of the development of vaccines for animals, specifically for farmed mink and the possible use in companion animals, big cats and non-human primates in zoos and private collections. At present we do not consider that it is necessary to vaccinate animals against the virus that causes COVID-19. There have been very few cases of infection reported from companion animals or zoo animals and none provide evidence to support development of severe clinical signs as a result of infection with this virus alone. If the virus biology changes such that companion animals do become important in the epidemiology of transmission to humans, we will reconsider.

Presently, there is only limited transmission of the virus between certain species of animals – namely between captive mink and under experimental conditions, between ferrets and between cats. No transmission has been detected with livestock species.

We have provided updates to SAGE on the likely risk of infection of cats and dogs, and of *Mustelinae* (including mink and ferrets). As a result, the detection of SARS-COV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) in any animal sample is now legally reportable under the Zoonoses Order (relevant in all four Devolved Administrations). The requirement to register large breeding groups of ferrets is going through consultation and stakeholders have reacted positively.

We have been involved in the recent scientific opinion from European Food Safety Authority / European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control on surveillance for mink farming countries, and the World Organisation for Animal Health guidance on trade in live mink and raw mink pelts. We also have a subgroup with Joint Biosecurity Centre. The risk assessments produced by this group are currently being used to inform the UK Government's COVID-19 response.

■ Cetaceans: Animal Welfare**Steve Double:**[\[13992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department has spent preventing and tackling UK cetacean strandings in each year since 2015.

Rebecca Pow:

Since 2015, we have spent over £3.7 million on work to better understand and mitigate threats to cetaceans to help to reduce the likelihood of strandings taking place.

Over £1.4 million of which is funding for the Cetacean Stranding Investigation Programme, which aims to improve our understanding of, and ability to tackle, key threats to cetaceans. This programme coordinates the response to cetacean strandings in the UK and, where it has not been possible to return the animal to the sea, it provides an assessment to determine the cause of death. We have recently let a 10-year contract to continue this important work.

Steve Double:

[\[13993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of collisions between cetaceans and vessels, referred to as ship strikes, in UK waters or involving UK ships in each of the last three years.

Rebecca Pow:

We recently let a 10-year contract for the continuation of our widely respected UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme. This scheme investigates the causes of death of stranded cetaceans around the UK coast, improving our understanding of, and ability to tackle, key threats like ship strikes. Between 2016 and 2020, the CSIP team examined 663 cetaceans and found only 11 showed evidence of ship strikes. While ship strikes are a serious threat to cetaceans globally, there is low prevalence of incidents occurring within UK waters.

We work through the Conservation and Scientific Committees of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to understand and reduce the threat posed by ship strikes. The IWC is also collaborating with other relevant organisations at both regional and inter-governmental levels to share information and expertise. We recently contributed £20k to the IWC to support efforts to better understand and mitigate ship strikes.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Emergencies and Disaster Management

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[13190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the annual (a) budget and (b) expenditure of his Department's CBRN Emergencies team, formerly the Government Decontamination Service, was in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK Government Decontamination Service (GDS) was provided by the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) between 1 April 2009 and 31 July 2014, during which time budget and expenditure records were collated and held centrally by Fera. GDS became the CBRN Emergencies Team when it moved to core Defra on 1 August 2014. Defra does not hold information on budgets or expenditure prior to 2012.

FINANCIAL YEAR	BUDGET	EXPENDITURE	DESCRIPTION
2012/13	2,265,505	2,584,312	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2013/14	2,906,387	2,447,233	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2014/15	2,218,500	1,854,214	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2015/16	1,582,368	1,475,962	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2016/17	2,078,936	1,610,024	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2017/18	2,078,936	1,460,811	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2018/19	15,778,936	13,380,220	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
2019/20	1,366,000	1,016,852	Includes, pay, non-pay and programme. Excludes Evidence R&D
Total	30,275,568	25,829,628	

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Freedom of Information**Luke Pollard:** [\[15389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has referred any Freedom of Information requests received by his Department to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House on Freedom of Information requests for advice on handling, in the last two years.

Victoria Prentis:

FOI requests are referred to the Clearing House in line with the published criteria available on gov.uk. The Clearing House, which has been in existence since 2004, provides advice to ensure a consistent approach across government to requests for information.

Florence Eshalomi: [\[15459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department operates a red, amber and green rating system for categorising Freedom of Information requests according to their presentational sensitivity.

Victoria Prentis:

No. All FOI requests are treated in exactly the same way.

■ Drinks and Food: Prices**Alexander Stafford:** [\[14103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of applying minimum pricing to (a) alcohol, (b) sugar and (c) other products in the food and beverage sector.

Victoria Prentis:

No assessment has been made on minimum pricing for food or drink, but the Government is committed to tackling obesity.

The DHSC launched 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' in July 2020. The strategy demonstrates an overarching, holistic campaign to reduce obesity, takes forward actions from previous chapters of the childhood obesity plan and sets out measures to get the nation fit and healthy, protect against Covid-19 and protect the NHS.

■ Environment Protection: International Cooperation**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [\[13268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage greater international environmental conservation.

Rebecca Pow:

This Government is seizing the opportunities of our G7 and COP26 Presidencies to drive international action on the environment. We have negotiated a historic 2030 Nature Compact committing to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, agreed by

Leaders at the G7 Summit in Carbis Bay, and G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' agreed an ambitious communique with over 120 commitments. The UK is also committed to playing a leading role in developing an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at CBD COP15 and to secure ambitious environmental commitments at UNFCCC COP26.

The UK also played a leading role in developing the Leaders' Pledge for Nature which I am pleased to report that 89 world leaders have now signed. Furthermore, 80 countries now support an international target to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's ocean by 2030 through membership of the UK-led Global Ocean Alliance or the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which the UK co-chairs with Costa Rica and France.

We are leading by example. We have committed to spend at least £3bn of International Climate Finance on nature over the next five years and launched the £500m Blue Planet Fund. Domestically, we are introducing a world-leading legally-binding target for species abundance by 2030 in the Environment Bill, aiming to halt the decline of nature.

■ Farmers

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[13267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support farmers.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government's Agricultural Transition Plan sets out how we will maintain the same level of investment for farmers in England, which is £2.4 billion a year across this parliament. We will reinvest money saved by reducing Direct Payments into improved and new environment schemes and schemes which will help farmers get their businesses ready for the transition. These will include grants to invest in productivity measures, support to new entrants, supporting farmer-led innovation and improving farm resilience.

■ Fisheries

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[13263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the fishing industry.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to supporting the fishing industry and ensuring a prosperous and sustainable seafood sector. Now that we have left the EU we will use our Fisheries Act to deliver bespoke fisheries management for the benefit of the whole of the UK.

Earlier this year we delivered a funding package of up to £23 million, which was used to deliver temporary support schemes to seafood businesses affected by COVID-19 and new trading conditions. This was used to deliver the Seafood Disruption Support

Scheme, which paid seafood businesses a proportion of export losses experienced in January, and the Seafood Response Fund, which paid three months of average fixed costs to fishing and shellfish aquaculture businesses.

£32.7 million has been made available to support the seafood sector this financial year, which meets the Government's manifesto commitment to maintain funding for the sector. Part of this funding will be used to deliver funding schemes in each of the four administrations of the UK. In England, the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme will support the long-term sustainable growth of the seafood sector and will initially focus on helping businesses adapt to new conditions and opportunities arising from leaving the EU, as well as supporting the on-going recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

The Government has gone even further than its manifesto commitment with the Prime Minister's announcement that an additional £100 million will be made available across the UK for transformative seafood projects that will rejuvenate the industry and our coastal communities. It will be used to invest in: modernising and expanding infrastructure; the science and data needed to ensure a sustainable sector; and the training required to ensure the workforce has the capacity, skills and expertise required for a thriving and prosperous industry. More detail on this funding will be made available in due course.

■ Fisheries: Quotas

Luke Pollard:

[\[10636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential market effect of small quotas on demersal fisheries that rely on catching prawns to make trips commercially viable.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK's approach in annual negotiations has been to seek solutions that are sustainable, and which support our fishing industries and local communities. Following the ICES advice for zero catches for quota stocks taken within mixed fisheries would, if applied, close economically important UK fisheries and have a significant impact on the associated coastal communities such as the Irish Sea Nephrops fishery where whiting is an unavoidable bycatch. In this situation, a total allowable catch (TAC) has been set at a level to allow a bycatch of whiting which seeks to prevent closing the Nephrops fishery while still allowing whiting to recover.

■ Forests

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[13261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to create new woodlands.

Rebecca Pow:

We are committed to increasing tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament. We published our ambitious England Trees Action Plan on the 18th May which sets out our plans to at least treble tree planting rates in

England as a key contribution to that 30,000ha UK commitment – this represents an unprecedented increase in woodland creation in England, supported by £500 million from the Nature for Climate Fund.

The England Trees Action Plan sets out a framework for a range of new incentive which will be launched through the course of this year, providing significant support for 2021/22 planting season. This includes launching a new £15.9 million England Woodland Creation Offer where Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply for support to create new woodland to boost more traditional methods of tree establishment as well as natural colonisation, agroforestry, and riparian planting. We've also extended our Urban Tree Challenge Fund, delivering trees in areas of low tree cover and social deprivation, and have launched a new £2.7 million Local Authority Treescape Fund, aimed at establishing more trees in non-woodland settings such as riverbanks or hedgerows.

As well as opening new and improved national grants, we are also supporting a number of Woodland Creation Partnerships, bringing local stakeholders together to help deliver sustainably designed woodland which can improve connectivity of priority habitats and provide enhanced natural capital value. This includes delivering a new programme of planting through England's Community Forests, called Trees for Climate, which will deliver 6,000 hectares of new woodland by 2025. Three newly created Community Forests will join England's existing ten Community Forests to deliver the Trees for Climate programme from 2021-22 onwards.

For the last planting season (2020/21) we kick-started tree planting efforts through a number of initiatives including, £12.1 million investment in expanding England's ten Community Forests; £1.4 million of planting along rivers through the Environment Agency; Support from the £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund for a range of charity projects to protect and plant trees.

■ Game: Farms

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[13852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that game farms are compliant with the keeping gamebirds Codes of Practice.

Victoria Prentis:

We are committed to maintaining our position as world leaders in farm animal welfare and want to improve and build upon that record, working in partnership with farmers to support healthier, higher welfare animals. As referenced in the recently published Action Plan for Animal Welfare we are actively exploring options for strengthening the UK system moving forward and are examining the evidence around the use of cages in farming, including their use for breeding pheasants and partridges.

The welfare of gamebirds is protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes offers additional

protection and provides keepers with guidance on how to meet the welfare needs of their gamebirds as required by the 2006 Act. It recommends that barren cages for breeding pheasants and small barren cages for breeding partridges should not be used and that any system should be appropriately enriched.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) carry out targeted inspections on gamebird farms. Advice on compliance with the gamebird code and welfare legislation is a key component of all APHA inspections. Appropriate action is taken against anyone who breaks the law.

■ Imports: EU Countries

Paul Maynard:

[\[13006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what products imported from the EU requiring sanitary and phytosanitary inspections have had the fees for those inspections waived until 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

Plant health controls of goods imported into GB from the EU are being introduced in phases, aligned to the risks posed by different regulated commodities. Those goods which present the greatest potential biosecurity risk, 'high-priority plants', have been subject to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) controls since 1 January 2021. The selection of consignments for physical checks is risk-based, so that lower risk goods receive a lower frequency of checks. As such, fees need to be adapted to ensure there is no over-recovery of costs.

All other regulated goods are not subject to plant health controls until 2022, as such no fees are currently associated with these EU imports. Similarly, for other SPS goods, fees are only being charged at the point checks are being introduced, in line with the published timetable for the phased introduction of checks.

■ Marine Protected Areas: Fishing Vessels

Tim Farron:

[\[13003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of banning bottom trawlers and supertrawlers from Marine Protected Areas.

Rebecca Pow:

It is essential that all damaging activities are prevented in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Not all fishing activities will require management, only those likely to damage the designated features of a MPA, such as trawling on the seabed. 'Supertrawlers' generally target fish within the water column and so are unlikely to damage the seabed habitats for which most MPAs are designated.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities assess each MPA site and develop appropriate management measures. 98 MPAs in inshore waters now have management measures in place to protect sensitive features from bottom towed fishing gears. For

MPAs in our offshore waters, the MMO has embarked on an ambitious three-year programme to fully manage any harmful fishing activity.

On 8 June 2021, the Government published its response to the Benyon Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). The Government accepted the central recommendation that we should take forward some pilot sites and we will designate these next year. HPMAs prohibit extractive, destructive, and depositional uses, allowing only non-damaging levels of other activities to the extent permitted by international law. As such, bottom trawlers and super trawlers would not be permitted to fish in HPMAs.

■ Meat: Australia

Caroline Lucas: [\[13023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether (a) meat is slaughtered in Australian slaughterhouses to standards equivalent to those in the UK and (b) Australian meat would comply with Schedule 5 of The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015; and if he will place a copy of that assessment in the Library.

Victoria Prentis:

Any imports of meat from Australian slaughterhouses into the UK must come from an establishment that has been assessed by the competent authority in Australia to supply goods that are at least equivalent to UK standards as required under Article 127(3)(e) of Retained Regulation 2017/625.

Meat imported from trading partners, including Australia, must also comply with Article 12 of Retained Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. Schedule 5 of The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 provides for the enforcement of this requirement.

At the end of the transition period, existing EU legislation and standards on food safety and animal health and welfare were enshrined in UK law, including existing approvals and restrictions for Australia to import meat into Great Britain. Prior to this, the competent authority in Australia was assessed by the European Commission in 2019 for the import of meat products, including for welfare at slaughter, and was found to be compliant.

■ Nappies: Environment Protection

Ruth Jones: [\[13219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the environmental impact of single-use nappies.

Ruth Jones: [\[13220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to establish clear environmental standards for nappies marketed as biodegradable, compostable, eco-friendly and other similar terms.

Rebecca Pow:

In line with the 25 Year Environment Plan, and our Resources and Waste Strategy, we are considering the best approach to minimise the environmental impact of a range of products, including nappies, taking on board the environmental and social impacts of the options available.

Potential additional policy measures include standards, consumer information and encouraging voluntary action by business. We are seeking powers, through the Environment Bill, that will enable us to, where appropriate and subject to consultation, introduce eco-design and consumer information requirements. This could include labelling schemes that provide accurate information to consumers, to drive the market towards more sustainable products.

We are also funding an environmental assessment of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products (AHPs) with the primary focus on nappies. This is looking at the waste and energy impacts of washable and disposable products, disposal to landfill or incineration, and recycling options. The research will be published later this year, following peer review, and will help inform possible future action on nappies by Government and industry.

■ Nature Conservation**Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[13260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect native species and wildlife in England.

Rebecca Pow:

Towards our ambition to protect our native species and address biodiversity loss in England, we will be amending the Environment Bill to require an additional target for species abundance for 2030, aiming to halt the decline in nature. The Bill also introduces a range of ambitious measures including, for example, mandatory biodiversity net gain in the planning system. Furthermore, we will publish a Green Paper later in 2021, setting out how our protections framework might better deliver this and our wider domestic ambitions.

We are also looking to the action needed on the ground and continuing to work with stakeholders to determine the specific actions that will be paid for by our new schemes that will reward environmental land management. We are launching at least 10 long-term Landscape Recovery projects between 2022 and 2024 to restore wilder landscapes through long-term land use change and support the establishment of a Nature Recovery Network. Additionally, the Nature Recovery Network Delivery Partnership is currently bringing together representatives from over 400 organisations to drive forward the restoration of protected sites and landscapes and help create or restore at least 500,000 hectares of new wildlife-rich habitat across England.

The £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund has also kick-started a pipeline of nature-based projects to restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with the natural environment.

■ Packaging: Waste Management

Ruth Jones:

[\[13221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's Resources and Waste Strategy, how his Department's proposals to introduce extended producer responsibility for packaging will (a) promote resource efficiency, (b) move towards a circular economy and (c) minimise the residual waste produced.

Rebecca Pow:

In the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy we set out our ambitions of doubling resource productivity and eliminating avoidable waste by 2050. Extended Producer Responsibility is an established policy approach adopted in many countries around the world. It gives producers an incentive to make better, more sustainable decisions at the product design stage, as well as placing the financial cost for managing these products once they become waste, on producers. To be more efficient in the way we use our stock of natural resources we need to rethink how we design and make products and invoke the 'polluter pays' principle.

The implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging will see the introduction of modulated fees for producers placing packaging on the market. These fees will be varied, with higher costs placed on producers using packaging that is less easily recycled, helping to ensure more circularity within the system, more recycling, and less waste going to the residual waste stream. The shift in the cost of managing packaging waste produced by households from the public purse onto producers will also incentivise producers to consider if a packaging item is necessary, encouraging packaging reduction and a more efficient use of resources. Producers will also be required to meet ambitious recycling targets.

In certain circumstances, fees could be modulated to deliver funding to support additional collections and upgrading of infrastructure to allow recycling of currently unrecyclable materials. To meet ambitious recycling targets across all materials, producers will need to invest in the infrastructure required to enable these targets to be met. We also consulted on the introduction of reuse targets within Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging, which will help encourage circularity, a more efficient use of resources, and prevent waste entering the residual waste stream.

The second consultation on the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging closed on 4 June 2021 and we are currently analysing the responses.

■ Peat Bogs: Environment Protection

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[13259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect peatlands.

Rebecca Pow:

We are committed to protecting and restoring our vulnerable peatlands in England, helping us to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and protecting valuable habitats and the biodiversity therein.

We recently published our England Peat Action Plan which sets out further measures to restore, protect and manage England's peatlands. These measures include our commitment to publish a consultation this year on banning the sale of peat and peat containing products in the amateur sector by the end of this parliament. We are addressing the degradation of lowland peat and launched the new Lowland Agricultural Peat Task Force in January 2021, which will develop recommendations to extend the useable life of our agricultural peat soils.

We are also ramping up current levels of peatland restoration through the Nature for Climate Fund, which will provide funding for the restoration of at least 35,000 hectares of peatland by 2025. We will set a target for peatland restoration as part of the forthcoming Net Zero Strategy which will be consistent with our obligations to meet Carbon Budget 6. The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2021 came into force on 1 May 2021, banning the burning, without a licence, of specified vegetation on protected blanket bog habitats.

■ Plants: EU Countries**Paul Maynard:**[\[13004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what financial impact assessment he has made of the effect on the ornamental horticulture sector of the introduction of fees for plant health import inspections applicable from 1 June 2021 for plants imported from the EU.

Paul Maynard:[\[13007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what consultation the Government undertook with representatives of the ornamental horticulture industry on the introduction of fees for the inspection of plant and tree imports applicable from 1 June 2021 for plants and trees imported from the EU.

Paul Maynard:[\[13010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of undertaking a review of the plant and tree import inspection fees regime that has been applicable from 1 June 2021 for imports from the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra took the decision to delay the introduction of fees for import checks of high-priority plants and plant products for 5 months to give businesses more time to prepare and adjust to the new charging arrangements. The methodology used to calculate fees for plant health services was agreed with trade following a fees review and consultation in 2017. During this time Defra has communicated extensively with

industry and stakeholder groups to ensure they are prepared for the new fees coming in.

It has long been UK Government policy to charge for many publicly provided goods and services. The standard approach is to set fees to recover the full costs of service delivery. This relieves the general taxpayer of costs, so that they are properly borne by users who benefit from a service. This allows for a more equitable distribution of public resources and enables lower public expenditure and borrowing. Defra plant health services operate in line with that principle and have done for many years.

Plant health fees are reviewed regularly and adjusted to ensure no under, or over, recovery of costs and amended as necessary. For instance, prior to the public consultation on the methodology for calculating plant health fees in 2017, costs for export certification services were being significantly under-recovered, and subsequently new fees were introduced in 2018 to eliminate the shortfall.

We do not anticipate the introduction of fees for high-priority plants and plant products from the EU to have a significant impact on the overall volume of imports of these goods. Businesses will, as they already have in some cases, adapt their operating model to minimise the fees they pay, e.g. through greater consolidation of consignments.

Demand for high-priority plants (largely ornamental garden plants) is especially high as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, with consumers choosing to spend more time and therefore money on their homes and gardens. Whilst this will prompt greater domestic production of these plants, which Defra supports, EU countries such as the Netherlands, will remain a key source due to their prominence in the global market and their geographical proximity.

Paul Maynard:

[13008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in EU member states on their respective phytosanitary processes with the aim of establishing plant and tree health import inspections at points of embarkation.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra officials have been looking at a wide range of measures to make the import of plants and trees as efficient as possible, without compromising our high biosecurity standards. There is regular dialogue between our plant health services and those of our key trading partners in the EU, including on e-certification most recently, which will streamline the exchange of phytosanitary certificates for the benefit of businesses and regulators alike.

As to checks at point of embarkation, there are legal limitations with locating GB officials in a different jurisdiction to perform statutory functions, and whilst internationally there are precedents for locating inspectors in other countries, these staff typically perform an audit and assurance role rather than performing pre-import checks. Consequently, we are not actively pursuing this option with trading partners

now, but Defra officials will continue to work with stakeholder organisations and those that import regulated plants and plant products from the EU to ensure GB plant health controls work as effectively and efficiently as possible.

■ Plastics

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[13269]

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

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. We are making great strides to tackle plastic pollution across the country. In December 2018 we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy and keep resources in the system for as long as possible. In October 2020, we introduced measures to restrict the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds. The single-use carrier bag charge, which has led to a 95% reduction in the use of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarkets, has been increased to 10p and extended to all retailers to encourage customers to bring their own bags to carry shopping and reduce the volumes of single-use plastic being used. At Budget 2020 the Chancellor announced the tax on plastic packaging of £200 per tonne for plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, effective from April 2022.

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

The Government has put together a package of over £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. £38 million was set aside through the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund, the last funding competition of which opened in June 2020. The Resource Action Fund included £10 million specifically to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter. The Government has also announced £60 million of funding through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150 million investment from industry, towards the development of smart, sustainable plastic packaging (SSPP), which will aim to make the UK a world leader in sustainable packaging for consumer products. Two SSPP funding opportunities have been open for bids in 2021: the SSPP

Demonstrator Round 2 and the SSPP business-led research and development competition.

Science estimates that the annual plastic flow into the ocean will triple between 2016 and 2040. Due to the scale of the marine litter challenge the UK believes it is time to negotiate a new global agreement on marine litter and microplastics at the United Nations Environment Assembly. A new global agreement would build upon the important work we are doing to tackle marine litter both domestically and internationally and support our commitments to eliminate plastic entering the ocean.

■ Recycling

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[13264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase recycling rates.

Rebecca Pow:

In 2019, the Government published our Resources and Waste Strategy, which included our commitment to a target of 65% of municipal waste to be recycled by 2035. To help us achieve this target, we have committed to introducing major reforms to the waste sector: Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (EPR), a deposit return scheme for drinks containers (DRS); and consistency in household and business recycling collections.

We published consultations for these measures in 2019. Following support for the proposals in the consultations, the Environment Bill sets out the primary legislation to establish these reforms. We published second consultations on these reforms in 2021, which provide further detail on the policies consulted on previously, including implementation timelines for the introduction of these new measures. The consultation on consistency in household and business recycling is still open and closes on 4 July 2021: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/>

Collectively, these reforms will help to increase the quantity and quality of material recycled. They will also help to increase participation in recycling by reducing confusion over what can be recycled and making it easier to recycle both at home and away from home.

■ Restaurants: Carbon Emissions

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[13191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of encouraging or requiring restaurant chains to introduce information on the carbon cost of menu items.

Victoria Prentis:

The environmental impacts of food are complex, with the whole food chain having a role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and meeting both domestic and international climate targets. There are currently no legal requirements for UK

restaurant chains to display information related to carbon emissions from food production on their menus. However, the Government is supportive of work being done in this area. Examples include Defra's funding of the Waste and Resources Action Programme (known as WRAP) to work across the supply chain to cut carbon and food waste in the sector by one fifth between 2015 and 2025.

The Government will continue to work with the hospitality industry to help it reduce its environmental impacts and provide this information clearly to consumers in an efficient manner, without creating unnecessary burdens that can result in increased prices for consumers.

Defra will investigate the opportunity to review aspects of food labelling following the outcomes of Henry Dimbleby's independent review of the food system, due this summer. The Government will respond to this with a Food Strategy White Paper within six months.

■ Seas and Oceans: Marine Environment

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[13262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect the oceans.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK is a global leader on marine protection. Leading the Global Ocean Alliance and as Ocean Co-Chair of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, the UK is championing a target under the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect at least 30% of the global ocean as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures by 2030 ('the 30by30 target'). Under UK leadership, 80 countries have now committed to support the adoption of this target at CBD COP15.

Domestically, we have built a comprehensive network of MPAs and are focusing on making sure they are protected properly. 98 MPAs in inshore waters already have management measures in place to protect sensitive features from bottom towed fishing gears and the Marine Management Organisation has embarked on a three-year programme of work to manage impacts from fishing activity in all English offshore MPAs. The Government has also launched plans to increase protections for England's waters through a pilot scheme to designate marine sites in England as Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). HPMAs will take a 'whole site approach', conserving all species and habitats within their boundary to maximize protection of marine habitats and species. The Government recognises that the strict protections implied by HPMAs will cause some concerns with other sea users and intends to liaise closely with them throughout the process, including the fishing industry.

The UK also supports the conclusion of negotiations on an ambitious new implementing Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction ('BBNJ Agreement') as soon as possible. Areas beyond national

jurisdiction cover more than 60% of the global ocean, and so this Agreement includes provisions that allow for the establishment of MPAs in these areas, a key mechanism to deliver the '30by30' target.

■ Transport: Air Pollution and Biodiversity

Geraint Davies: [\[14131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he had discussions with the Prime Minister on the impact of private modes of transport including private jets on (a) air pollution and (b) biodiversity before the G7 meeting in Cornwall.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government considered this issue and took steps to ensure a sustainable event. We appointed engineering, design and consultancy firm Arup, to help the event achieve ISO 20121 sustainability certification and to deliver a carbon-neutral event by developing a Carbon Management Plan. This included offsetting for G7 and guest leader and staff travel.

The Government is committed to improving the environmental sustainability of its own estates and operations through the Greening Government Commitments (GGCs). As part of these, central Government departments are currently required to report on and reduce the number of domestic flights they take. The latest annual report showed the Government as a whole had reduced the number of domestic flights it took by 28% in 2018-19 compared with the 2009-10 baseline. The Government Fleet Commitment also commits central Government departments to have 25% of their fleet as ultra-low emissions vehicles by 2022 and 100% by 2030. Progress against the fleet commitment will be reported on for the first time in the forthcoming 2019-20 GGC annual report.

■ Water Supply: Yorkshire and the Humber

Julian Sturdy: [\[13045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential risk of water shortages in Yorkshire within the next 25 years as a result of population growth and climate change; and what steps his Department is taking to address that risk.

Rebecca Pow:

Water companies have a statutory duty to provide a secure water supply for customers by developing and maintaining efficient and economical systems of water service provision.

Statutory water resources management plans show how water companies will meet this duty by managing water supply and demand for at least the next 25 years. The plans must take account of the implications of population growth and climate change. The plans must be subject to public consultation, including with statutory consultees Ofwat and the Environment Agency before the Secretary of State allows their publication.

Yorkshire Water published its water resources management plan in 2020. The plan must be reviewed annually and revised at least every five years.

The Environment Bill will enhance the water resources management planning processes. The measures will complement the Environment Agency's National Framework for water resources, published in 2020, which sets out England's future water needs and our expectations for how regional groups will inform the delivery of those needs, including Water Resources North informing Yorkshire Water's water resources management plan. The measures will allow improved collaboration between water companies and with other water users, to aid environmental improvement and the sustainable use of water resources.

The Environment Bill will also give the Environment Agency additional powers to vary or revoke permanent abstraction licences without the liability to pay compensation where it is necessary to protect the environment from damage, or where the licence holder has abstracted at least 25% less water than their licensed volume (underused their licence) in every year over the previous 12-year period. The Environment Agency already have powers to vary or revoke water company abstraction licences without being liable to pay compensation but these additional powers will tackle unsustainable abstraction from other water abstractors.

■ **Wildlife: Smuggling**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[13875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with counterparts in other countries on the development of a joint strategy to tackle wildlife crime and the illegal wildlife trade.

Rebecca Pow:

We recognise that international cooperation is essential to tackle the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). The UK has supported strategic join-up with other countries. For example, in 2018, the UK convened the largest ever global IWT conference at which 65 countries signed up to the London Declaration, which calls on the international community to act together to support and build urgent collective action against the IWT.

We work with international partners directly through supporting initiatives to combat the IWT. This includes Defra's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, work with G7 Ministers to agree priorities and commitments for tackling the IWT, Ministerial and official contact with counterparts in countries affected by the IWT, and through joint initiatives under relevant international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Financial Action Task Force.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:**[\[13061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that victims of Libyan sponsored IRA terrorism receive justice.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government reiterates its profound sympathy for UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism and indeed for all victims of the Troubles. As set out in the 23 March Written Ministerial Statement: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-03-23/hcws874>, providing compensation for the actions of the Qadhafi regime, separate from the UK-funded support that has already been made available for victims of the Troubles, is the responsibility of the Libyan State. We continue to press the Libyan authorities, including at the highest levels of the Libyan Government, to address the Libyan State's historic responsibility for the Qadhafi regime's support for the IRA.

■ **Africa: Food****Sarah Champion:**[\[13959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa; and what plans his Department has to continue to support small-scale food producers in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK's engagement with Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa has primarily focused on strengthening regional food trade and resilience within the continent and collaborating with members of the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa-led Partnership for Inclusive Agriculture Transformation in Africa. An evaluation is currently in progress of Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa's effectiveness on its broad set of activities. FCDO sits on the steering group for this work.

We continue to ensure smallholder farmers are integrated into food and agriculture value chain related programmes across our Africa country portfolio as well as our regional portfolio for example through the Africa Food Trade and Resilience programme and AgDevCo - a flagship agribusiness impact investor in Africa.

■ **Antigua and Barbuda: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[12975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK has taken to support Antigua and Barbuda with the roll-out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK has taken to support The Bahamas with the roll-out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK has taken to support Barbados with the roll-out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK has taken to support Grenada with the roll-out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK has taken to support Jamaica with the roll-out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance the Government has provided to St Lucia to support the roll out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government has provided to St Kitts and Nevis to assist the roll out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance the Government has provided to St Vincent and The Grenadines to support the roll out of covid-19 vaccines.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[13871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government is providing to Trinidad and Tobago for the roll out of covid-19 vaccinations in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are among the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), committing £548 million which leveraged through match funding \$1 billion from other donors in 2020. COVAX has supplied COVID-19 vaccines to over 125 countries and economies, including Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. The UK has also committed to share 100 million vaccine doses by June 2022, with the majority to go to COVAX.

The UK's investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has also been a key contribution to the global vaccination effort. So far 450 million doses of the vaccine have been distributed worldwide at non-profit prices, with two-thirds going to lower- and middle- income countries

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported to Antigua and Barbuda.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported to The Bahamas.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported to Barbados.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported to Grenada.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported to Jamaica.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported from the UK to St Lucia.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine have been exported from the UK to St Kitts and Nevis.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[13872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford/AstraZenca covid-19 vaccine have been exported to Trinidad and Tobago.

Nigel Adams:

The following number of COVID-19 doses have been delivered to the following Caribbean Islands through COVAX, which includes the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine:

Antigua and Barbuda - 40,800

The Bahamas - 67,200

Barbados - 67,200

Grenada - 45,600

Jamaica - 124,800

St Lucia - 50,400

St Kitts and Nevis - 21,600

St Vincent and the Grenadines - 45,600

Trinidad and Tobago - 67,200

More information can be found through the World Health Organisation website, (<https://covid19.who.int/>).

The UK's investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has been a key contribution to the global vaccination effort. So far 450 million doses of the vaccine have been distributed worldwide at non-profit prices, with two-thirds going to lower- and middle- income countries.

■ Developing Countries: Climate Change

Chris Law:

[\[13975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on developing countries' ability to become and remain climate resilient.

James Duddridge:

We are committed doubling our International Climate Finance (ICF) to at least £11.6 billion over the next five years, between 2021/22 and 2025/26. We aim for a balance between mitigation and adaptation in our ICF. This is crucial both to reducing emissions and helping countries prepare for, and build resilience to, the impacts of climate change.

The UK is using our COP26 Presidency to mobilise action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement, encourage greater political ambition, and turn this into targeted, tangible and practical action to support adaptation and resilience.

Chris Law:

[\[13976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact on the UK of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on countries that will be affected by climate change.

James Duddridge:

As stated in the Integrated Review, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss will be the UK's international priority through COP26 and beyond

We are committed doubling our International Climate Finance to at least £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26 and we will invest at least £3 billion of our

International Climate Finance to protect and restore nature and biodiversity over the next five years.

■ Development Aid

Chris Law: [\[13092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will provide a breakdown of the amount of Official Development Assistance spent on the 2021-22 thematic area open societies and conflict in 2019-20.

Nigel Adams:

The thematic areas announced for 2021-22 reflect the Foreign Secretary's strategic framework outlined to parliament on 26 November 2020. The Statistics on International Development (SID) National Statistics, published on GOV.UK, provide an overview of all UK spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by calendar year (2019 is the latest available year). Sector groupings reported in the SID are collected and reported in line with the OECD reporting directives, using the international OECD sector categories and will not directly correspond with the thematic areas announced for planned 2021-22 spend.

Chris Law: [\[13093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will provide a breakdown of the amount of Official Development Assistance spent on the 2021-22 thematic area science, research and technology in 2019-20.

James Duddridge:

The thematic areas announced for 2021-22 reflect the Foreign Secretary's strategic framework outlined to parliament on 26 November 2020.

The Statistics on International Development National Statistics, published on GOV.UK, provide an overview of all UK spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by calendar year (2019 is the latest available year). Sector groupings reported in the Statistics on International Development are collected and reported in line with the OECD reporting directives, using the international OECD sector categories and will not directly correspond with the thematic areas announced for planned 2021-22 spend.

■ Humanitarian Aid

Chris Law: [\[13091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, he will provide a breakdown of the total amount of Official Development Assistance spent on the 2021-22 thematic area humanitarian preparedness and response in 2019-20.

James Cleverly:

The thematic areas announced for 2021-22 reflect the Foreign Secretary's strategic Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework outlined to parliament on 26 November 2020. This included a thematic area for humanitarian preparedness and

response. The Statistics on International Development (SID) National Statistics, published on GOV.UK, provide an overview of all UK spend on ODA by calendar year (2019 is the latest available year). Sector groupings reported in the SID are collected and reported in line with the OECD reporting directives, using the international OECD sector categories and will not directly correspond with the thematic areas announced for planned 2021-22 spend.

■ Independent Commission for Aid Impact: Finance

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[14032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of reductions in funding to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact on delivering value for money for Official Development Assistance across all Government Departments in 2021.

Nigel Adams:

ICAI's budget has not been cut as no change has been made to ICAI's overall indicative programme budget for the four-year period from 2019-2023. Given the impact of the global pandemic on the economy and, as a result, the public finances, we have had to make some difficult decisions on programme budgets for 21/22 and have taken the decision to provide ICAI with a flat settlement of £2.8 million for 21/22, which is consistent with the average of the four-year programme budget of £11.1 million. Budgets for 2022/23 will be determined through the spending review process later in the year.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Stephen Morgan: [\[14058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 42248, when he plans to publish the findings from the research element of the People for Peaceful Change Project.

James Cleverly:

Our three-year People to People programme aimed to bring together Israelis and Palestinians to cooperate on issues which can have a positive impact on both communities, helping to build understanding between people on both sides of the conflict in support of a peaceful, negotiated resolution. The programme included a research component that looked more broadly at the impact of People to People work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An internal panel of researchers analysed the findings and the final research report can be found via this link:
<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300366>.

Stephen Morgan: [\[14059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the US administration on support for peacebuilding efforts between Israelis and Palestinians.

James Cleverly:

The UK is in regular communication with key international partners, including the US, regarding support for peacebuilding efforts between Israelis and Palestinians.

Stephen Morgan:[\[14060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 8197 on Israel: Palestinians, whether he plans to renew the People for Peaceful Change programme, which ended in March 2020.

James Cleverly:

The UK's People-to-People programme in the OPTs concluded in March 2020. The UK continues to fund on-going peacebuilding projects in Israel, as part of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) which will be subject to a separate review upon completion.

We remain committed to improving the lives of Palestinians and maintaining the viability of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

■ Nigeria: Violence**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[13873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help the Nigerian Government resolve violence in the northern and eastern regions of that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government condemns all incidents of violence in Nigeria. In the North East, attacks by terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, have had a devastating impact on local communities. We are committed to helping Nigeria tackle the threat and are providing funding and operational support to the Multi-National Joint Taskforce, which coordinates the military response to the conflict. We are also providing humanitarian and stabilisation assistance to support communities affected by the conflict. In other parts of Nigeria, incidents of intercommunal violence and criminality, including kidnaps, have also had a devastating impact on local communities.

In the South East, the UK Government is concerned by the increasing levels of violence. We encourage reconciliation between the many ethnic groups and communities that make up and contribute to the strength and diversity of Nigeria. All actors must do all they can to stop rising insecurity and violence. We are working with our partners in Nigeria to promote intercommunal and interfaith dialogue, and continue to call for solutions that address the underlying causes of violence. During my visit to Nigeria in April, I met with the President's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, and Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama, to discuss insecurity. I raised the importance of protecting all communities across Nigeria.

■ Occupied Territories: Overseas Aid

Stephen Morgan: [\[14057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance the UK has spent in the Palestinian Territories in each of the last three years; and on what programmes that funding was spent.

James Cleverly:

UK funding has provided support to the Palestinian Authority, economic development programmes, humanitarian assistance and support to UNRWA to improve the lives of Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

UK spending on Overseas Development Assistance is detailed in the annual Statistics on International Development, available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>

■ Overseas Aid

Caroline Lucas: [\[13912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2021 to Question 6304 on overseas aid, what plans the Government has to communicate the decision to defer Aid Match payments to individuals who have donated to fundraising campaigns in the expectation that (a) their donation would be matched by the UK government and (b) projects would begin in June 2021.

Nigel Adams:

In his Written Ministerial Statement to parliament, the Foreign Secretary protected the UK Aid Match programme including all active grants. The reduction in this year's budget has meant that projects scheduled to start between June and November 2021, will now start in April 2022. We continue to work closely with the organisations impacted and encourage them to use their communications channels. It is not common for fundraising appeals to detail project start dates as they are often delayed for many reasons. To provide further assurance to the charities and their supporters, we have agreed to exceptionally sign grants in advance, reaffirming FCDO's commitment to match appeal donations pound for pound.

Caroline Lucas: [\[13913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the cut to the Official Development Assistance funding, (a) how many government partners are still waiting for confirmation as to the revised status of projects and (b) by what date his department plans to have informed all partners of the revised status of their projects; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO Officials are working through the implementation of the budgets set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS 21 April 2021. We will continue to engage with all our partners through our regular channels.

■ Overseas Aid: Armed Conflict

Chris Law: [\[13970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the whole aid portfolio delivered in conflict affected countries is sensitive to the conflict dynamics around them.

James Cleverly:

Conflict sensitivity is an essential part of UK aid programming. At a minimum, all our aid-funded programmes must ensure they minimize the risk of doing harm in conflict-affected countries. The UK government regularly conducts analyses of evolving conflict dynamics to inform our interventions, and our conflict sensitivity tools and guidance are widely used. Moreover, we have used UK aid to fund resources and technical support on conflict sensitivity open to other donors and implementing partners.

The Integrated Review calls for the government to take a more integrated approach to addressing the long-term drivers of conflict. As part of this, FCDO will continue to ensure our aid-funded work, where appropriate, addresses drivers of conflict and supports stability building and conflict prevention. This will be key to achieving our commitment to reduce the frequency and intensity of conflict and instability to alleviate suffering, harnessing the full range of government capabilities.

■ Overseas Aid: Biodiversity and Climate Change

Chris Law: [\[13090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will provide a breakdown of the amount of Official Development Assistance spent on the 2021-22 thematic area climate change and biodiversity in 2019-20.

James Duddridge:

The thematic areas announced for 2021-22 reflect the Foreign Secretary's strategic framework outlined to parliament on 26 November 2020. The Statistics on International Development (SID) National Statistics, published on GOV.UK, provide an overview of all UK spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by calendar year (2019 is the latest available year). Sector groupings reported in the SID are collected and reported in line with the OECD reporting directives, using the international OECD sector categories and will not directly correspond with the thematic areas announced for planned 2021-22 spend.

■ Overseas Aid: Grants

Chris Law: [\[13097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the total number of partners waiting for confirmation on the status of projects due to changes to ODA.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO Officials are working through the implementation of the budgets set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS on 21 April 2021 with partners and suppliers.

Chris Law:[\[13098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when partners still waiting for confirmation as to the status of projects due to the changes in funding under the ODA will be informed of the status of these projects.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO Officials are working through the implementation of the budgets set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS of 21 April 2021, with partners and suppliers.

Chris Law:[\[13099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to inform all current government partners of the status of their projects as a result of the changes in funding under the ODA.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO Officials are working through the implementation of the budgets set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS 21 April 2021. We will continue to engage with all our partners through our regular channels.

■ Overseas Aid: Peace Negotiations**Chris Law:**[\[13968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's capabilities in and contribution to peace and stability.

Chris Law:[\[13969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's ability to use learning from peacebuilding organisations in the Government's policy and programming responses.

Chris Law:[\[13972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential long-term effects of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the Government's ability to engage armed groups in dialogue and peace processes.

Chris Law:[\[13973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential long-term effects of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the potential for peace in conflict-affected states.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to working to reduce the frequency and intensity of conflict and instability. ODA programming is one of a number of tools which will help the UK to address this, along with diplomatic engagement and our ability to provide technical expertise to effectively support peace processes and mediation. It is the effective combination of these tools that enables the UK to play a leadership role in supporting peace processes, and ensuring mediators sustain engagement with all relevant armed actors. The FCDO's new conflict centre will draw on expertise and learning from across HMG and the wider peacebuilding community including from civil society organisations and academia. This new strategic approach will allow us to drive greater impact from our aid budget, notwithstanding the difficult financial position we face.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **Air Pollution**

Ben Bradley: [\[10615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the advice given to the Government by the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group of 4 November 2020 to take urgent action to support industry and consumers in ensuring that they are selecting and using air cleaning technologies safely and effectively, what steps his Department has taken in response to the provision of that advice.

Ben Bradley: [\[11648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the advice given to the Government by the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group of 4 November 2020 to undertake rapid research to evaluate likely consumer response to use of air cleaning technologies and understand their level of knowledge and potential behavioural actions, what steps his Department has taken in response to the provision of that advice.

Ben Bradley: [\[11649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the advice given to the Government by the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group of 4 November 2020 to develop impartial guidance for consumers to allow them to identify appropriate air cleaning devices and technologies to combat SARS-CoV-2, what steps his Department has taken in response to the provision of that advice.

Jo Churchill:

The advice from the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies was discussed 5 November 2020. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for determining future policy and regulatory action.

■ Asthma

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[13925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's timescale is for the publication of the joint asthma guideline from NICE/BTS/SIGN.

Jim Shannon: [\[13944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the November 2020 report of the all-party Parliamentary group for Respiratory Health entitled Improving Asthma Outcomes in the UK, whether his Department has plans to establish unified asthma guidelines as recommended in that report.

Jo Churchill:

The British Thoracic Society, Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence have begun work to develop a joint guideline relating to asthma care. The recruitment process for the roles of guideline group co-chair and topic expert is underway, with the first scoping workshop due to take place on 6 August 2021. The likely publication date is 2023.

■ Asthma: Coronavirus

Sir Graham Brady: [\[12069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of (a) hospital admissions with covid-19 and (b) intensive care admissions of patients with covid-19 had previously been diagnosed with asthma in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: Many cases of asthma will be diagnosed and managed in a primary care setting. Primary care data is not currently linked to the data collected by the National Health Service for hospital admissions.

■ Cancer: Mental Health Services

Alex Norris: [\[11641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the April 2018 study by the Mental Health Foundation that one in three people with cancer will experience a mental health problem such as depression or anxiety before, during or after treatment, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the mental health needs of people diagnosed with cancer are assessed in a timely manner.

Alex Norris: [\[11642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the extent to which there are regional variations in access to mental health support for patients with cancer.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 June 2021]: The NHS Long Term Plan states that, by 2021, where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer should receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan based on holistic needs assessment, end of treatment summaries and health and wellbeing information and support, including for mental health needs. All patients will have access to the right expertise and support.

Adults experiencing cancer can also access Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) mental health services, which provide evidence based psychological therapies for people with anxiety disorders and depression, implementing the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines. The implementation of IAPT long term condition pathways has been identified as a priority to support integration of mental health and physical health services for people with co-morbid long term conditions, such as cancer. No assessment has been made of regional variations in access to mental health support for patients with cancer. However, the extent and nature of IAPT outreach work will be determined at a local level.

Alex Norris:[\[12276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendations of All.Can UK's report of December 2020 entitled, Placing the psychological wellbeing of people with cancer on equal footing to physical health, if his Department will take steps to (a) raise awareness within the oncology workforce of the psycho-social support services that the third sector offers for cancer patients and (b) ensure that patients are signposted to those services.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement have established a task and finish group to look at psychosocial support for people affected by cancer. Part of this work will involve examining signposting to psychosocial support from any provider including the third sector.

The revised Cancer Care Review requirements for general practitioner practices mean patients' psychosocial support needs will be addressed twice in their first year after diagnosis. Patients should be signposted via Primary Care Network link workers to non-cancer specific support such as local authority health and wellbeing activities.

■ Cancer: Screening**Mark Menzies:**[\[13920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people awaiting a routine invitation for (a) bowel screening, (b) breast screening and (c) cervical screening in England.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that all National Health Service cancer screening programmes are operational and sending out screening invitations at, or above, pre-pandemic levels. There is no backlog for the cervical screening

programme and NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to address backlogs in the breast and bowel screening programmes.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Chris Green:

[\[12165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage companies to (a) collect high-quality evidence through randomised control trials and (b) pursue regulatory approval for cannabis-based medicinal products.

Chris Green:

[\[12166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use prescribed in the UK, either privately or on the NHS, are subject to robust standards of (a) safety, (b) quality and (c) efficacy.

Jo Churchill:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating medicines in the United Kingdom and continues to provide scientific and regulatory advice to any company at any stage of product development to support companies intending to apply for clinical trials authorisations or marketing authorisations. However, the MHRA cannot solicit applications.

The Department has called on industry to invest in clinical trials and subject their products to full scrutiny by the regulators. To stimulate research proposals, the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) has issued two calls for research into cannabis-based products for medicinal use and has taken steps to advertise the call to all manufacturers interested in supplying the UK market. The NIHR also remain open to the submission of proposals outside of these specific calls.

The vast majority of cannabis-based products for medicinal use are unlicensed medicines and have not had their safety, quality or efficacy assured by the MHRA, nor their cost-effectiveness determined by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. However, any unlicensed medicines manufactured in or imported into the UK must be manufactured to Good Manufacturing Practice standards. This is assured through licensing processes and import controls.

■ Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information he holds on the origin of the covid-19 pandemic; and what steps he is taking to identify the origin of that pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

A transparent, independent and science-led investigation is an important part of the international effort to understand the origins of COVID-19. The World Health Organization convened a group of independent experts to begin a study and phase

one reported on 30 March 2021. Our priority is to ensure a timely, transparent, evidence-based and expert-led phase two.

■ **Coronavirus: Death**

Justin Madders:

[14167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral evidence to the Health and Social Care and Science and Technology Select Committees on 10 June 2021, Q1293, HC95, whether the report he received containing a reasonable worst case scenario estimate of 820,000 covid-19 deaths contained a reasonable best case scenario estimate; and if he will place a copy of that report in the Library.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: At the start of 2020, the Government's COVID-19 planning was partly informed by the reasonable-worst case scenario (RWCS) for pandemic influenza, as well as emerging evidence on COVID-19. These planning assumptions are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-vs-covid-planning-assumptions-10-february-2020>

The estimate of 820,000 deaths relates to the estimated number of excess deaths in the 2019 pandemic influenza RWCS. It does not relate to direct COVID-19 or flu deaths, nor to estimated deaths under a COVID-19 RWCS. Excess deaths are the number of deaths from any cause that occur above the yearly expected average. The planning assumptions used at the beginning of 2020 were updated as new evidence on COVID-19 emerged. The March 2020 RWCS for COVID-19, includes an optimistic scenario, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-worst-case-planning-scenario-29-march-2020>

■ **Coronavirus: Disadvantaged and Ethnic Groups**

Rachael Maskell:

[14009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether levels of covid-19 infections are higher in (a) minority ethnic groups and (b) areas of greater deprivation.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: Public Health England monitors COVID-19 case rates by a range of demographics including ethnicity and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). As of 3 June 2021, case rates were highest in 'other ethnic' and Pakistani ethnic groups. By IMD, case rates were highest in the most deprived group in the 10 to 16 years old and 20 to 39 years old age groups and highest in the least deprived group in the 17 to 19 years old age group.

■ Coronavirus: Ivermectin

Justin Madders:

[13989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Therapeutic Taskforce on investigations into the use of Ivermectin for the purposes of treating covid-19 patients.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is closely monitoring the evidence on the use of ivermectin as a treatment for COVID-19. A recent collection of small studies show some positive indications. However, further high quality, larger-scale studies are still needed to confirm the efficacy of this treatment. The Therapeutics Taskforce will keep the position on ivermectin under review as more data becomes available.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Rachael Maskell:

[14012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he expects NICE to publish its guidance on Long Covid.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a rapid guideline on the management of the long-term effects of COVID-19 on 18 December 2020. The guideline is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188>

NICE will review and update the guideline in response to emerging evidence on the long-term effects of COVID-19 and its management.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Justin Madders:

[10453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that covid-19 vaccinations carried out by NHS Wales are recognised by NHS England.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The vaccines authorised for use are commensurate across the United Kingdom, therefore vaccinations carried out by the devolved administrations are recognised by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

Damien Moore:

[10616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make covid-19 vaccinations mandatory for NHS workers.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We would encourage all National Health Service staff to take up the offer of the vaccine, to help protect themselves and others they come into contact with. We are working to maximise uptake of the vaccine and to protect vulnerable patients.

Damien Moore:[\[10622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of booked vaccine appointments are subsequently cancelled by vaccine centres.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[13002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to (a) research, (b) clinical trials and (c) psychological support services to help improve outcomes for patients with covid-19 vaccine-induced immune thrombocytopenia and thrombosis.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR is supporting a relevant study on mechanisms of immunothrombosis in Vaccine-Induced Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT). Findings from this study are available at the following link:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaut.2021.102662>

There are currently no clinical trials specifically looking at VITT in the United Kingdom. As the largest public funder of health and care research, the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including COVID-19 vaccine-induced thrombocytopenia and thrombosis.

We are investing an additional £110 million to expand adult mental health services including psychological and talking therapies and £111 million to increase the mental health workforce support patients with conditions such as COVID-19 VITT.

Jim Shannon:[\[13066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of who should be eligible to receive the Janssen covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Deployment decisions for the Janssen vaccine within the COVID-19 vaccine programme are currently under consideration. The Department will be guided by the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation before making a final decision.

Alison Thewliss:[\[13113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people no immigration status are able to access covid-19 vaccinations.

Alison Thewliss: [\[13114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people without immigration status will be able to access covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: Vaccination against COVID-19 is offered to every eligible adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that workplaces release staff for their covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: Employers are encouraged to discuss whether staff need time off to be vaccinated, as well as adjusting working schedules accordingly to accommodate those who are absent due to receiving the vaccine.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what tests are available to members of the public to assess whether immunity has been accrued as a result of receipt of the covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

There are no such tests currently available.

Clinical trials have been undertaken to understand the immune response, safety profile and efficacy of the currently licensed vaccines as part of the regulatory process.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[13202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's guidance is on how soon after recovering from a covid-19 infection a person can receive a covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: Public Health England has issued guidance for healthcare practitioners which states that vaccination should be deferred in those who have tested positive for COVID-19 infection until they have recovered approximately four weeks after the onset of symptoms, or four weeks from the first confirmed positive test in those who are asymptomatic. This guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-programme-guidance-for-healthcare-practitioners>

■ Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK

Sarah Owen: [\[8747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with the members of the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: We continue to have meetings with those bereaved as a result of the pandemic, in order to hear and learn from their experiences.

■ Dental Services

Emma Hardy: [\[13205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to assess the availability of NHS Dentist appointments in England.

Jo Churchill:

Early in 2021, NHS England made an assessment of the level of activity that could be safely delivered by dental practices. Whilst practices are limited by infection prevention and control measures, they have been asked to prioritise patients with urgent need or in vulnerable groups, followed by overdue routine treatment.

Karin Smyth: [\[2342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of how many and what proportion of NHS dentists that closed in the last 18 months have been replaced.

Jo Churchill:

National Health Service dental activity is replaced through recommissioning of services. The most recent data is available to September 2020. Of the 77 contracts terminated or handed back between January and September 2020, 41 contracts have been recommissioned or approximately 60%.

■ Dialysis Machines

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[12061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of patients who will require dialysis in each of the next five years.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched a Renal Services Transformation Programme that includes improving renal dialysis services as a major theme and will involve consideration of future demand for dialysis services over the next three years. There are approximately 28,000 people currently receiving dialysis in England and the programme will include the modelling of different scenarios taking into account demographics, disease prevalence and other factors that will impact future demand.

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[12062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of funding allocated to providers of dialysis (a) in a clinical setting and (b) at home.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement commission specialist services for patients requiring renal dialysis using renal dialysis tariffs. Renal dialysis tariffs take into account the different types of dialysis used and where dialysis occurs, such as in renal units and at home. Funding decisions for these specialised services are made in line with local priorities and in the context of the interim funding regime in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Endometriosis

Helen Hayes: [\[10536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average waiting time for (a) screening and (b) treatment for endometriosis in (i) Lambeth, (ii) Southwark, (iii) London and (iv) England.

Helen Hayes: [\[10537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for endometriosis screening and treatment.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No estimate has been made.

There is no national screening programme for diagnosis of endometriosis. Women should consult their general practitioner in the first instance if they suspect symptoms. Clinicians should follow the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guideline on diagnosis and management of endometriosis. Diagnosis and treatment times for endometriosis this will be considered as part of the Women's Health Strategy.

Research to explore women's experiences in primary care when presenting with endometriosis-like symptoms is currently underway, hosted by the National Institute of Health Research. The results will be published later this year and will help us to understand delays in diagnosis.

■ European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Crispin Blunt: [\[R\]](#) [\[14130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what risk assessment he has made of the implications of ending UK participation with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) European Drug Report 2021; and on what basis the UK Government has withdrawn from participation, in the context of EU membership not being a requirement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the United Kingdom ceased to be a member of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on 31 January 2020. As the UK is no longer a member of EMCDDA, it does not take part in the annual reporting process.

The UK continues to have strong domestic drugs monitoring and surveillance systems, augmented through our sharing of information and expertise with international partners, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization.

■ Gambling: York**Rachael Maskell:**[\[10501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support services the Government is providing to people experiencing problem gambling in York; and how much funding those services have received in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

In 2019, the National Health Service announced the creation of up to 15 specialist gambling clinics by 2023/24 with up to £15 million of funding over the same period. Work continues on the phased expansion of these services. Whilst there are no clinics currently based in York, individuals are able to access the NHS Northern Gambling Service, based in Leeds, jointly funded by GambleAware, or satellite clinics in Manchester and Sunderland. There are also national treatment services available, which are commissioned by GambleAware, an independent charity.

■ General Practitioners: Students**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[13855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a dual-GP registration system for university students.

Jo Churchill:

It is not possible for patients to register with two general practitioner (GP) practices at the same time. However, we recognise that students registered with a university GP practice may wish to access treatment from another GP when returning home or when away from university. Students are therefore able to register as a temporary resident at another GP practice.

■ Health Services: Gender Recognition**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[13179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that trans and non-binary individuals have equitable access to healthcare.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service has included a new gender and trans status question in the GP Patient Survey to improve evidence around the experiences of trans and non-binary people. The results of the survey will be published in late summer 2021. NHS England continues to work across a range of projects to address inequalities experienced by trans and non-binary people.

Health Visitors: Training**Sarah Olney:**[\[14026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Health Visiting training places were available in the year 2019-2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: In 2019-20, Health Education England funded 517 training places on the health visiting programme.

Health: Disadvantaged**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[12951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle health inequalities highlighted by the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) has been leading work on the response to tackle COVID-19 disparities experienced by individuals from an ethnic minority background. The 'Third quarterly report on progress to address COVID-19 health inequalities' was published in May 2021 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/third-quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities/third-quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities>

The focus over the last quarter has been on those ethnic minority groups worst affected by the second wave of the pandemic.

Widespread vaccination could potentially combat inequalities in the impact of COVID-19 between ethnic groups. The Community Champions scheme announced in the first quarterly report has continued to engage with a wide variety of communities to help dispel myths around vaccines. Funding was also provided to Strengthening Faith Institutions and Near Neighbours in order to utilise their networks with at-risk communities. Both organisations are partnering with a host of community organisations as well as Community Champions across England to increase vaccine uptake. Broader health inequalities work will be led by the Office for Health Promotion under the direction of the Chief Medical Officer.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Chris Stephens: [\[11584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using universal credit data automatically to identify and register eligible households for Healthy Start vouchers, on an opt out rather than an opt in basis.

Jo Churchill:

The Healthy Start Scheme supports pregnant women and families on lower incomes to make healthier food choices. All eligible Universal Credit beneficiaries receive a letter inviting them to apply for the Healthy Start scheme, together with a pre-populated application form.

The Department is currently developing a digital approach to Healthy Start, to make it easier for families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits.

■ HIV Infection: Females

Kerry McCarthy: [\[10217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans for his Department's upcoming Women's Health Strategy to contain specific action to (a) support women affected by HIV and (b) reduce new HIV diagnoses among women.

Jo Churchill:

As part of the Government's commitment to reaching zero new HIV transmissions in England by 2030, the department is currently developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and an HIV Action Plan, planned for publication later this year. Issues related to reducing HIV diagnoses of and improving care for women affected by HIV will be considered as part of the development of these publications, rather than the Women's Health Strategy.

■ Lung Diseases

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[11518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of developing a diagnostic pathway for patients with respiratory symptoms.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have already invested £2 million to fund the establishment of Respiratory Clinical Networks to support the delivery of the objectives set out in the NHS Long Term Plan and provide clinical leadership to respiratory services in managing the current and on-going demand posed by COVID-19.

A priority area for respiratory services in the Long Term Plan is spirometry and this will be supported through the 13 respiratory clinical networks and the national team. The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) for 2021/22 includes improved respiratory indicators. The QOF will measure patients with a clinical diagnosis of

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease on or after 1 April 2021 whose diagnosis has been confirmed by a quality-assured post-bronchodilator spirometry test.

■ Lung Diseases: Coronavirus

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[11521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on prognoses for chronic lung conditions that arise following a covid-19 infection.

Jo Churchill:

It is not yet clear what the physical, psychological and rehabilitation needs will be for those experiencing long-term effects of the virus, including those with chronic lung conditions. The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of the COVID-19 virus, including symptom severity and duration, long term effects and how best to support recovery.

■ Migrants: Coronavirus

Alison Thewliss:

[\[13112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the barriers to covid-19 vaccination as a result of immigration status.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: Vaccination against COVID-19 is offered to every eligible adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status. Entitlement to free National Health Service treatment is generally based on ordinary residence in the UK. A person who can show they have taken up ordinary residence in the UK can access all NHS services immediately, including COVID-19 vaccinations, based on clinical need. No immigration checks are needed to receive these services and the NHS is not required to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum:

[\[6495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence he holds to indicate that singing increases the transmission of covid-19 compared with other activities where large groups are present indoors.

Jo Churchill:

Singing is considered a high-risk activity, compared with other large group activities, because it significantly increases the risk of transmission through small viral particles in the air and droplets. As outlined in the Government's safer singing guidance, there is evidence that shouting or singing loudly can produce 20 times the mass of aerosol than speaking at a normal level of loudness. Several outbreaks of COVID-19 have been associated with adult choir rehearsals and performances and in church

congregations across the world. The safer singing guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing>

All such activity should follow the principles set out in the guidance to reduce the risk of transmission, including ensuring that singing takes place only in larger well-ventilated spaces or outdoors and limited number of people sing together.

■ Oral Cancer

Peter Dowd: [12159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to increase patients' understanding of the merits of regular dental check-ups in helping to ensure the early diagnosis of oral cancer.

Peter Dowd: [12160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Cancer Research's projection that oral cancer will rise by 33% in the UK from 2014 to 2035, whether his Department has made an assessment of the (a) potential merits of increasing patients' awareness of the dental services available to support the diagnosis of oral cancer and (b) importance of those services.

Peter Dowd: [R] [12161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the projection by Cancer Research that cases of oral cancer will rise by 33 per cent from 2014 to 2035, whether his Department has plans to (a) promote and (b) increase the public's awareness of dental services available to support the diagnosis of that cancer.

Peter Dowd: [R] [12162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to help improve patients' understanding of the merits of regular dental check-ups in helping to ensure the early diagnosis of oral cancer.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made. Whilst dentists can play an ad hoc role in detecting potential oral cancers as a by-product of dental check-ups, oral cancer is primarily detected through the medical system. The Department currently has no plans to promote dentist appointments for the specific purpose of oral cancer diagnosis. Patients with concerns should seek advice from their general practitioner and not wait for their next dental appointment.

■ Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[12255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to ensure that pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy is made a UK-wide priority in pancreatic cancer care.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines recommend that pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) should be considered for people with both operable and inoperable pancreatic cancer. The National Health Service has commissioned an audit into pancreatic cancer so that wider improvements can be made for patients and any variations in treatment, including access to PERT, can be reduced.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2021 to Questions 11719, 11720, 11721 and 11722 on Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments, if he will make an assessment of trends in the level of rates of prescription of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT).

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2021 to Questions 11719, 11720, 11721 and 11722 on Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments, in what format information on the proportion of pancreatic cancer patients in England prescribed with pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) is available, and if he will publish what information his Department holds on the proportion of pancreatic cancer patients in England prescribed with that treatment.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: The Department has no plans to do so.

The following table shows the number of items that were prescribed for pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy medicines and dispensed in the community in England in each year from 2015 to 2019. No data is captured on the prescription form about the clinical indication for which a prescription is intended.

CALENDAR YEAR	TOTAL ITEMS
2015	457,101
2016	488,341
2017	518,634
2018	563,787
2019	606,656

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2021 to Questions 11719, 11720, 11721 and 11722 on Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments, when does he expect the audit commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement to (a) conclude and (b) report its findings.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently beginning the formal commissioning process with the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership. In consultation with stakeholders, the scoping for the new audit will begin this year. It will be put out for tender next year, with the first results expected from 2023 onwards.

■ Prostate Cancer

Sir George Howarth: [\[15170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure take up of personalised stratified follow-up pathways for prostate cancer in England.

Sir George Howarth: [\[15171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to include questions on the personalised stratified follow-up pathways for prostate cancer within the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2021.

Sir George Howarth: [\[15172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prostate cancer patients have been enrolled in the personalised stratified follow-up pathway across each of the Cancer Alliances in England.

Jo Churchill:

As set out in the National Health Service 2021/22 priorities and operational planning guidance, Cancer Alliances are delivering personalised stratified follow up (PSFU) pathways for prostate cancer across England. NHS England and NHS Improvement published a handbook to support implementation of PSFU pathways in March 2020 and continue to work with Cancer Alliances to ensure all trusts have a PSFU pathway for prostate cancer in place.

There are no plans to include questions on PSFU pathways for prostate cancer within the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2021. NHS England and NHS Improvement do not hold information on the number of prostate cancer patients enrolled on to a PSFU pathway across each of the Cancer Alliances in England.

■ Prostate Cancer and Urology: Nurses

Sir Paul Beresford: [\[13525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of clinical nurse specialists who specialise in (a) urology and (b) prostate cancer who plan to retire in the next 12 months.

Sir Paul Beresford: [\[13838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken an audit of the clinical nurse specialist workforce for (a) urology and (b) prostate cancer.

Sir Paul Beresford: [\[13839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to undertake an audit of the prostate cancer workforce prior to the next iteration of the NHS People Plan.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold information on the number of clinical nurse specialists who specialise in urology and prostate cancer who plan to retire in the next 12 months. No audit has been undertaken an audit of the clinical nurse specialist workforce for either urology or prostate cancer.

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and employers to determine our future workforce and people priorities which will inform the NHS People Plan and future workforce planning requirements in key areas such as cancer. In 2021/22 Health Education England is offering training grants for up to 250 nurses to become cancer nurse specialists and up to 100 nurses to become chemotherapy nurse specialists.

■ Steroid Drugs

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[13923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make recurrent oral corticosteroid use a trigger for treatment reviews in asthma and other conditions.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[13924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans are in place to introduce NHS system incentives to reduce over-prescribing of oral corticosteroid for asthma and severe asthma.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[13927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there are plans for the NHS to put in place system incentives to reduce overreliance on SABA due to (a) environmental and (b) clinical concerns posed by such overreliance.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are considering the feasibility of introducing system incentives to increase appropriate prescribing of inhaled corticosteroid inhalers and to improve the prescribing of short-acting beta-agonists inhalers. The aim will be to improve patient outcomes but also reduce carbon emissions.

An update to the General Practitioner Contract for 2020/21 to 2023/24 includes an improved Quality Outcome Framework asthma domain. This incorporates aspects of care positively associated with better patient outcomes and asthma control, including a review of inhaler technique and record of exacerbations.

■ Surgical Mesh Implants**Dr Julian Lewis:****[13837]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the efficacy of current techniques for the removal of failed vaginal mesh implants; what support the Government is providing to research on how to remove that mesh (a) more completely and (b) less traumatically than at present; and whether that research includes any technique for dissolving mesh prior to removal.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: There is very little published evidence linked to the efficacy on the removal of failed vaginal mesh implants. In order to effectively monitor outcomes of the procedures carried out, the specialist mesh services will be required to record data on a central patient-identifiable database, subject to patient consent.

NHS England has published a service specification to support the delivery of specialised services for women with complication of mesh, which sets out the standards for these services. The specification requires that all mesh services are to meet annually in a clinical summit to present data and discuss surgical and non-surgical outcomes. NHS England and NHS Improvement's Pelvic Floor Health Programme is to establish a research and education group to promote pelvic floor health research and education. This will include mesh complications and removal.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Sir Desmond Swayne:****[11458]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish daily totals of positive covid-19 tests for passengers arriving from Portugal in the last 30 days.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 June 2021]: We have no current plans to publish the information requested on a weekly basis. However, the Joint Biosecurity Centre will be publishing data tables on a three weekly basis to align with their reviews of countries' risk assessments. These tables are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/weekly-statistics-for-nhs-test-and-trace-england-20-may-to-26-may-2021>

Caroline Lucas:

[11529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason Bangladesh was added to the travel red list before India; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Decisions to place countries, including India and Bangladesh, on the 'red list' are taken by the Government informed by evidence including the Joint Biosecurity Centre's risks assessments alongside wider public health factors.

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

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

■ **Travel: Quarantine**

Ed Davey:

[12059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support his Department has put in place for young children and families that are quarantining in Government provided hotels.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: The hotels selected for managed quarantine are able to meet the vast majority of requirements. Hotels will prioritise allocating larger or connecting rooms to families. Whilst there is no prescriptive list of support for young children and families, there are opportunities to exercise outside as arranged with the hotel security guards and staff will be available. Medical and mental health support is provided where needed, together with access to social workers for advice and support. Food is available throughout the day with a choice of menus accommodating dietary requirements, delivered to the hotel rooms. All rooms have televisions and free WiFi.

Rachael Maskell:

[12192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of people on the amber travel list isolating at home after returning to the UK, under strict supervision of local public health teams.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: A period of quarantine is required where someone has been in an amber country or territory in the 10 days before arriving in England. This should take place at home or in the place the individual is staying for 10 days.

Public health self-isolation compliance checks are carried out on individuals who have a legal duty to quarantine for 10 days following international travel.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[12193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people travelling to amber list countries for family reasons can isolate at home on return under strict covid-19 quarantine measures.

Jo Churchill:

Any person travelling to an amber list country for family reasons is required to quarantine at home or in their own accommodation for 10 days after arriving in England. They must also take a COVID-19 test on or before day two and on or after day eight of quarantining. These requirements apply to all travellers arriving in England who have departed from or transited through an amber list country within 10 days before their arrival, regardless of their reason for travelling, unless exempt.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[12194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people travelling to the UK as a result of a bereavement can quarantine at home under strict public health supervision.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: Since February, all travellers arriving in England who have departed from or transited through a 'red list' country within 10 days before their arrival, will need to quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel, unless an exemption applies. When travelling from an 'amber list' country quarantine would take place at home or location where an individual is staying for a period of 10 days. When travelling from a 'green list' country there is no requirement to quarantine at all.

Those in quarantine may request permission to leave for a limited period if a close family member or member of their household is dying. They can also request permission to leave quarantine to attend a funeral although this would be limited to the day of the funeral or, in exceptional circumstances where a journey cannot be completed within one day, it may be possible to receive an exemption with restrictions to stay overnight elsewhere.

Sarah Owen:

[\[14067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on the number of exemptions from covid-19 hotel quarantine that have been granted.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: Since February 2021, approximately 60 people have been granted exemptions from COVID-19 managed quarantine facilities on medical grounds.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[14157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that staff working at covid-19 quarantine hotels have been offered a vaccination; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: Workers in hotels used as managed quarantine facilities are being offered vaccination according to their age and clinical risk along with the rest of the population. This is in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation which the Government has accepted.

The vaccination programme is currently on track to offer a first dose to all adults over 18 years old by the end of July.

Sarah Owen:[\[2458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on the number of people who have absconded from managed covid-19 quarantine facilities at the border.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2021]: The information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Fleur Anderson:[\[7293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking in response to complaints about the quarantine conditions in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Heathrow; and whether he is reviewing that contract.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has worked closely with the hotel's management and other service providers to increase staffing levels and improve the quality of food offered. Whilst there are no plans to review the contract, we are continuing to monitor the service through our on-site liaison officers.

Apsana Begum:[\[7958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how hotels were selected for providing covid-19 hotel quarantine accommodation; and what steps the Government is taking to ensure that hotel staff are effectively trained to meet the needs of people in quarantine.

Jo Churchill:

Corporate Travel Management (CTM) are responsible for identifying and contracting with the individual hotels. CTM contacted the main hotel chains to determine whether any properties in the area that meet our specification. A site visit is conducted to ensure the hotel meets the specifications of the Managed Quarantine Service, including sufficient space for exercise away from the public and for coaches to relay guests to and from the hotel. The transit time by coach from the airport is also considered.

All hotels are responsible for their own staff training and should comply with standards of operation regarding COVID-19 health and safety protocols. This includes physical distancing measures, hand hygiene and the wearing of face masks and gloves if mandated.

HOME OFFICE**■ Abuse and Discrimination: LGBT People****Feryal Clark:**[\[13241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to tackle abuse and discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+ people in the last three years.

Victoria Atkins:

All forms of abuse and hatred are unacceptable.

The UK has a robust legislative framework to respond to hate crimes, which target race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. The Government published the hate crime action plan (Action Against Hate: The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime) in 2016 and refreshed this Plan in October 2018.

The Government has commissioned a Law Commission review of the adequacy of current hate crime legislation. The review will report this year and we will respond to it when it is complete.

Also, the Home Office has funded multiple projects aimed at tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime including:

- Kick It Out, who produced resources to raise awareness of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse in football stadia;
- Barnardo's, who worked with schools in East Ridings of Yorkshire to promote understanding of LGBT lives and prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime;
- Galop, who produced and distributed a series of factsheets and research to understand tackle online homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse; and
- The Proud Trust who worked with the British Transport Police and rail companies to make public transport safer for LGBT people and encourage the reporting of hate crime.

Government action to tackle broader discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people includes:

- A commitment to holding an international conference on LGBT rights; the "Safe To Be Me" conference will be held in 2022.
- Announced a further £3.2 million of UK-funded projects in September 2020 to help Commonwealth Governments and civil society groups reform outdated laws and end the legacy of discrimination and violence.
- The DfE announced £750k of funding in June 2020, including a project for victims of hate-related bullying.

- We will bring forward legislation to ban conversion therapy as soon as parliamentary time allows and we will make new funds available to ensure that victims have better access to the support they need.

The Government will continue to work with the police, stakeholders including Galop and Stonewall and others to understand the concerns of LGBTQ+ communities and what should be done to address those concerns.

■ Asylum: Housing

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[13851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that people seeking asylum in the UK are housed in covid-19 compliant conditions.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office and their accommodation providers have been working with Public Health bodies throughout the pandemic to put in place a number of measures to support people in the asylum system who are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, including working closely with providers to make sure the most vulnerable people within the system receive the support they need.

Our Initial Accommodation (IA) has been reconfigured to meet local and national health guidance. People accommodated in hostel-based accommodation receive translated guidance in relation to social distancing, potential symptoms, self-isolating and hygiene requirements. Onsite assistance and guidance are provided by support staff.

In Dispersed Accommodation, which is commonly family houses or homes of multiple occupancy accommodating small numbers, our asylum accommodation providers have put in place a range of measures and additional support to enable households to comply with public measures on social distancing and self-isolation. This has included food parcels and other items for people who are unable to leave the house, provision of telephony for those who are isolating and do not have a telephone, as well as increased welfare contact for those who are isolating. Additionally, service user essential living needs -including for cleaning and sanitary items - are met through a weekly cash allowance.

All asylum seekers in our accommodation have access to our Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service provider, Migrant Help. They can contact Migrant Help 24 hours a day if they need assistance or guidance on COVID-19 or other issues – including reporting any concerns with accommodation.

■ Asylum: LGBT People

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[13176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals seeking asylum in the UK from homophobic, biphobic or

transphobic persecution abroad are (a) treated fairly and with dignity and (b) protected from persecution and harassment during their application.

Kevin Foster:

All LGBTQ+ individuals seeking asylum in the UK are given every opportunity to disclose information relevant to their claim before a decision is taken, including where it may be sensitive or difficult to disclose.

Each case is considered on its individual merits by caseworkers who receive extensive training. All available evidence is carefully and sensitively considered in light of published country information ensuring all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity.

The Home Office work closely with a range of organisations specialising in asylum and human rights protection to trans and LGB communities.

We ensure LGBTQ+ asylum seekers are signposted to relevant NGOs specialising in the support of these individuals. This is done through an information leaflet given to all asylum claimants at the point of claim which includes sections on legal advice, additional help and assistance with links to relevant legal bodies and support organisations.

LGBTQ+ claimants can access specialist support upon claiming asylum from Rainbow Migration (formerly known as the UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG)) who will guide them through the asylum procedure, including providing relevant information. They also offer one-to-one and group peer support to claimants.

■ **Asylum: Military Bases**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[13850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many former barracks sites are being used to house asylum seekers in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Asylum seekers are currently being accommodated in Napier Barracks. There are no other Ministry of Defence sites being used.

■ **Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence: Crime Prevention**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[12946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to engage women's groups in discussions with her Department on measures preventing (a) gender-based violence and (b) domestic violence.

Victoria Atkins:

Tackling gender-based violence and domestic violence is a key priority for this government. This April we passed our landmark Domestic Abuse Act which will strengthen our response to perpetrators and importantly provide greater protection to victims of this heinous crime.

This year we will also be publishing two complementary strategies to further transform the government's response to combating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse (DA). To inform our approach we have delivered a robust and wide-reaching VAWG Call for Evidence which received approximately 180,000 responses, including from victims, the public, academics and victim support services and organisations representing women's groups on VAWG and DA.

We meet regularly with organisations that support survivors to discuss our approach to the VAWG and DA strategies, and will continue to engage with their work and how we can work together, as well as with women's, girls' and victims' organisations on this important work, including several sector-wide sessions in the previous months, individual calls with leading VAWG organisations, and participation in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's regular sector calls.

We will continue this engagement as we seek to implement our ground-breaking Domestic Abuse Act, and as we finalise our complementary strategies for tackling VAWG and DA.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime

Feryal Clark:

[\[13246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle county lines drug trafficking and safeguard children from exploitation; and whether she plans to increase funding to (a) Enfield and Haringey Metropolitan Police Service, (b) Enfield Council and (c) grassroots community organisations in Enfield North constituency to help tackle drug trafficking and safeguard children from exploitation.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government recognises the devastating impact of county lines activity on children and vulnerable people.

We are determined to disrupt these ruthless gangs and put an end to exploitation. On 20 January the Government announced £40m of dedicated investment for 2021/22 to tackle drugs supply and county lines, doubling our investment from last year. This includes funding for The Metropolitan Police's Operation Orochi, which provides a dedicated taskforce to tackle county lines activity.

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

In addition, we continue to fund specialist support available for those affected by county lines exploitation including through Missing People's SafeCall service. This national service provides confidential, specialist advice and support to young people and their families/carers who are affected by county lines exploitation anywhere in England and Wales.

From 2019-2022, £105.5 million has been invested in multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in the 18 areas worst affected by serious violence, with £21,000,000 allocated to the MOPAC to develop the London Violence Reduction Unit.

We are also driving targeted action to respond to exploitation through the Home Office-funded Prevention Programme, delivered by The Children's Society. The Prevention Programme has coordinators in each of the ten policing regions, including London.

This financial year, the Home Office is also continuing to fund Young People's Advocates in London to support young women and girls at risk of or experiencing exploitation by gangs including county lines.

■ Home Office: Artificial Intelligence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to what extent their Department makes use of artificial intelligence in the implementation of its policies; and how much was spent from their Department's budget on artificial intelligence in each of the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad concept and includes a wide range of techniques including machine learning, natural language processing, and computer vision amongst others.

The Home Office is committed to using the latest technology to improve public services including using processes and algorithms developed using such artificial intelligence techniques. This is not undertaken as standalone activity and these techniques could be employed across a wide range of Home Office business areas. No centrally held register exists, and as such it would be of disproportionate cost to determine the use and spend over the last three years.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Stephen Farry: [\[13253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the guidance on late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), whether (a) not knowing about the scheme or deadline will be considered a reasonable ground for a late application to the EUSS or (b) an applicant will need to show they had a good reason for not knowing.

Stephen Farry: [\[13254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the guidance on late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), for what reasons the right to make a late application extended to people unaware of the need to apply for the EUSS because they have an EU right of permanent residence is limited to those with a

document from her Department to certify permanent residence, when that document is not required for an individual to have permanent residence status under the EEA Regulations.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has received more than 5.6 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme and issued more than 5 million grants of status, to 31 May 2021. Our focus remains on encouraging those EU citizens and their family members eligible for the scheme who have yet to apply to do so before the 30 June 2021 deadline for those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period.

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

The guidance is non-exhaustive and will underpin a flexible and pragmatic approach to considering late applications in light of the circumstances of each case. This will include where the applicant acquired a right of permanent residence under EU law, but did not obtain a document certifying this.

Stephen Farry:

[\[13255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the regulations for pending applications after the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), for what reason someone who submitted their EUSS application before the deadline, but are still waiting for a decision after the deadline passes, must additionally demonstrate that they were exercising a right to reside under the EEA regulations 2016 immediately before IP completion day of 31 December 2020 to continue to have a right to work, rent or access welfare benefits; and whether that requirement means that those EEA nationals are being treated differently as a result of the length of time her Department takes to finish processing their application.

Kevin Foster:

From 1 July, right to work and right to rent checks will change and EEA citizens will be required to demonstrate eligibility through evidence of their immigration status, rather than their nationality.

EEA citizens who make a successful application to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) are provided with digital evidence of their immigration status, which they can access and share online.

EEA citizens who have submitted a valid EUSS application by 30 June will be issued with a Certificate of Application. Pending the outcome of their application, they 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 employer and landlord

checking services. The Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue & Customs will also be able to determine an individual's status with the Home Office using existing services.

Consistent with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the Citizens' Rights (Application Deadline and Temporary Protection) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 protect the EU law rights held at the end of the transition period of a person who has made an application to the EUSS by the 30 June deadline, pending the outcome of the application (and of any appeal against the decision).

Neil Coyle: [\[13964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) staff in her Department, (b) consultants and (c) temporary support staff have been working on assessing EU Settlement Scheme applications in each of the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

We currently have 1,500 UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) European Casework staff in post.

Neil Coyle: [\[13965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to support employers whose employees are awaiting EU Settlement Scheme application decisions.

Kevin Foster:

Employers 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 they were undertaken.

Employers will not be required to conduct retrospective checks on existing employees if the initial check was undertaken on or before 30 June 2021.

We will shortly be updating our guidance for employers to ensure they are clear on the steps they should take from 1 July.

Neil Coyle: [\[13966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time is from submission to decision for her Department to process an EU Settlement Scheme application.

Kevin Foster:

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

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

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

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[12997]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 16 April 2021 on sexual exploitation, reference ZA56249.

Victoria Atkins:

A response was provided by the Minister for the Lords on 10 June 2021.

■ **Rape: Criminal Investigation**

Feryal Clark:

[13243]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 4059, what steps her Department has taken to improve investigation of allegations of rape to help increase the proportion of cases that result in charges being made.

Victoria Atkins:

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes that impact on victims for the rest of their life.

The Government has long recognised that the decline in the number of effective trials for rape and serious sexual offences in England and Wales is a cause of significant concern.

As a result, we commissioned the end-to-end rape review in March 2019 to look at evidence across the system, from reporting to the police to outcomes in court, in order to understand what is happening in cases of adult rape and serious sexual offences being charged, prosecuted and convicted in England and Wales.

The review represents a serious commitment to change by the Government and our partners. At its heart are a set of actions that will drive system and culture change to improve the quality of investigations, reduce the number of victims who don't feel able to engage with the criminal justice process, and to ultimately put more rapists behind bars.

We intend to publish the review shortly.

■ **Visas: Large Goods Vehicle Drivers**

Emma Hardy:

[13206]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a seasonal visa scheme for heavy goods vehicle drivers in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Government has no plans to introduce a seasonal visa scheme for heavy goods vehicle drivers in the UK.

Our new points-based immigration system makes clear employers should focus on investing in and offering rewarding packages to our domestic workforce, especially those needing to find new employment because of the economic impact of the pandemic, rather than relying on labour from abroad.

The Government is therefore working with the haulage sector to promote jobs, training, and a range of other initiatives to get more people into HGV driving.

The Home Office has amended the Immigration Rules for the visitor route to enable drivers who come to the UK on an international journey to transport goods or people on journeys within the UK and undertake cabotage operations in line with Department for Transport rules.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:**[\[13060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish a response to his Department's consultation on raising accessibility standards for new homes, which closed on 11 December 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

We are currently considering responses to our consultation on raising accessibility standards, and will be publishing a Government response setting out next steps.

■ **Antisemitism****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[13041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take in response to the latest figures published by the Community Security Trust on anti-semitism.

Eddie Hughes:

The recent rise in antisemitic attacks is completely unacceptable and we condemn it. Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we're taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms.

Since May, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has met with Jewish communities affected by the recent increase in hate crime and has met with Lord Mann, the Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, who is providing independent advice on the most effective methods to tackle antisemitism.

This Government has an excellent track record of taking action to prevent antisemitism.

We have provided funding to a number of innovative projects to reinforce messages of tolerance for our young people and teach them about the dangers of hate and we are providing £14 million this year for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings.

■ Building Safety Fund

Caroline Lucas:

[13914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of whether there are sufficient funds in the Building Safety Fund to pay out to all those eligible for funding under current criteria; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The additional £3.5 billion of funding announced on 10 February means that leaseholders and residents in eligible buildings can be reassured that unsafe non-ACM cladding on their blocks will be replaced.

Caroline Lucas:

[13916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many applications to the Building Safety Fund in relation to residential blocks in (a) Brighton and Hove and (b) the UK have been (i) made, (ii) approved, (iii) refused and (iv) not yet decided; and if he will provide a summary of the main reasons for unsuccessful applications.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building Safety Fund. Application progress is communicated to registrants who we expect will ensure that their residents are kept fully informed. Data for the Building Safety Fund is published and updated at: www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics.

Building Safety Fund registrations are considered ineligible where the buildings registered do not meet the criteria for the Fund. The eligibility criteria for the Building Safety Fund can be found in Prospectus Annex A: Technical Information of the Building Safety Fund Prospectus. It is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund>.

Caroline Lucas:

[13918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to increase the Building Safety Fund and change eligibility for that fund to include blocks of flats under 18 metres.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is focusing the Building Safety Fund on remediating high-rise buildings. This reflects the exceptional fire risk that certain cladding products pose at that height, as previously noted by Dame Judith Hackitt. Under 18 metres, the risk profile of buildings is different and will not always require the same level of remediation when risks are identified. We will provide leaseholders in lower-rise buildings between 11 and 18 metres (four to six storeys), with a generous new scheme to provide access to finance for cladding removal through a Government-backed finance scheme. No leaseholder in buildings of 11-18 metres will need to pay more than £50 a month to remediate unsafe cladding.

Government support does not absolve building owners of their responsibility to ensure their buildings are safe, and they should consider all routes to meet costs, protecting leaseholders where they can - for example through warranties and recovering costs from contractors for incorrect or poor work. We have provided expert advice on the measures building owners should take to ensure their buildings are safe.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Caroline Lucas:**[\[13917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish details of the new long-term, low-interest loan scheme for leaseholders in buildings below 18 metres where dangerous cladding need to be removed; when the loan scheme will be open for applications; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

We realise the need to get unsafe cladding remediated as swiftly as possible, as public safety is our first priority. We will publish further details as soon as we are able to.

■ Housing: Fire Prevention**Caroline Lucas:**[\[13919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions his Department (a) has had and (b) plans to have with representatives of freeholders on mitigating eviction risk to leaseholders in dispute on liability for remedial work and associated costs in relation to fire safety concerns, where leaseholders state an intention to withhold payments to freeholders until the dispute is resolved; and if he will make a statement

Christopher Pincher:

Residents' safety continues to be a top priority. We remain committed to ensuring that residents have a strengthened voice and can help to shape measures that affect the safety of their buildings. Regular engagement meetings are held with representatives of both freeholders and leaseholders to understand the issues they face. Officials will

continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to improve their safety and confidence in the new regime.

■ Housing: LGBT People

Feryal Clark:

[\[13242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to (a) assess whether there is a disproportionate level of homeless or insecure housing among LGBTIQ+ people, (b) ensure that local government services secure adequate resources to tackle root causes of discrimination, lack of acceptance and abuse directed towards LGBTIQ+ people and (c) help ensure the implementation of inclusive service culture provision in all facets of local government.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to tackling discrimination against LGBT people. When delivering and designing their services, local authorities must ensure they comply with the public sector equalities duty.

The Government has worked with Stonewall Housing to provide training to staff working with LGBT individuals across various housing services about the issues they may face and how best to support LGBT people.

The Government has made available an increase in Core Spending Power for local authorities in England from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms. Nearly all of this funding is unringfenced, recognising the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain current service levels, and giving them the necessary flexibility to respond to local priorities.

■ Land Use

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[13038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of suspending the 56 day restriction to allow the temporary use of land for (a) camping and (b) other activities to occur for up to six months.

Eddie Hughes:

We are currently considering options of how best to continue to support the camping sector this summer. Further announcements will be made shortly.

■ Leasehold: Insurance

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average increase in insurance premiums for leaseholders since the identification of fire safety deficiencies following Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017; what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) insurance providers and

(b) other relevant stakeholders on protecting leaseholders from increased insurance costs; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is aware that some leaseholders are finding it difficult to find affordable building insurance where their block has building safety concerns. We have had cases shared with the Department of large and variable premium increases.

Ministers have met senior representatives from the largest insurance companies and industry bodies. Ministers have questioned the pricing of buildings insurance, encouraged the insurance industry to take a proportionate approach to risk and have requested market solutions to address the issue. One of the largest insurers has recently stepped into this market.

We will continue to work with the insurance sector to restore confidence in building safety and a return to proportionate premiums and products.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to what extent their Department makes use of artificial intelligence in the implementation of its policies; and how much was spent from their Department's budget on artificial intelligence in each of the last three years.

Eddie Hughes:

Artificial intelligence has the potential to transform our processes, improving the efficiency, productivity, and user experience of services. We have recently started to explore the use of automation in the implementation of policies and services but are not aware of any committed spend on artificial intelligence at this point.

■ **Parking**

Rachael Maskell: [\[13996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much public bodies and Government agencies have spent on planning and developing new car parking facilities in the UK in each of the last five years.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many new car parking spaces public bodies and Government agencies have developed in each of the last five years.

Rachael Maskell: [\[14001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much his Department and its agencies have allocated to planning and developing new car-parking facilities during the 2019 Parliament.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[14002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding his Department and its agencies have spent on the planning and development of new car parking facilities in each of the last five years.

Luke Hall:

The information requested is not held centrally. However, local authorities report capital expenditure in their annual capital account returns, including that specifically relating to parking. This information is available in the individual local authority data tables at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-capital-expenditure-receipts-and-financing.

With respect to on-street parking, local authorities are responsible for providing adequate parking provision on their roads.

■ Planning Permission

Mark Eastwood:

[\[14073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of clauses 105 and 106 of the Environment Bill on outstanding planning applications with proposed development sites that include a variety of species and natural habitats.

Christopher Pincher:

These clauses in the Environment Bill support the Government's increased ambitions for nature and to deliver on our world leading target of halting species decline by 2030. The clauses reflect the importance of furthering the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and will enable the Secretary of State to introduce regulations which amend the Habitats Regulations as they apply in England. This will provide greater legal certainty and make environmental processes clearer, to help improve the condition of our most important habitats. The Secretary of State may only make regulations under these clauses if they are satisfied that the regulations do not reduce the level of environmental protection provided by the Habitats Regulations. These changes complement MHCLG's commitment to encourage biodiversity net gain through the planning system, as set out in our Planning for the Future White Paper.

■ Planning: Cultural Heritage

Alex Sobel:

[\[13214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has plans to include provisions on contested heritage in his proposals for planning reform.

Alex Sobel:

[\[13215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to change heritage management rules in planning law.

Alex Sobel:

[\[13216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to change heritage classifications in planning law.

Christopher Pincher:

In January, the Government announced new planning protections to ensure historic statues, monuments and plaques are 'retained and explained' for future generations. Following changes to the demolition permitted development right, the removal of these historic assets, whether listed or not, now requires listed building consent or planning permission. If a council intends to grant permission for the removal of a particular asset, the Secretary of State will be notified in order to decide whether to call in the decision for determination.

More generally, the Planning White Paper, Planning for the Future, emphasised the critical role the planning system has played in ensuring the historic buildings and areas we cherish are conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced by development. As we develop our proposals for the Planning Bill following consultation on the White Paper proposals, we want to build on the strong protections in the existing framework, to ensure there is no loss of protection for the historic environment. We will publish our response to the White Paper consultation prior to the Bill's introduction in Autumn.

■ **Solar Power: Planning Permission**

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[R\] \[13937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of updating the Solar Energy Planning Guidance to give the same protections to ordinary agricultural land, categories Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3b and below, that it receives in other planning guidance.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the benefits from natural capital, including those from the best and most versatile agricultural land. Though the Framework does not refer to agricultural land that is less versatile (graded 3b, 4 or 5 by Natural England), it does expect local planning authorities to have regard to the character and beauty of the countryside, and to protect valued soils and landscapes. Wherever possible, authorities should make the most of brownfield land for development.

The Framework explains that all communities have a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of green energy, but this does not mean that the need for renewable energy automatically overrides environmental protections and the planning concerns of local communities. As with other types of development, it is important that the planning concerns of local communities are properly heard in matters that directly affect them.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Prisoners' Release

Stephen Morgan:

[\[13210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues to ensure women prison leavers in Ministry of Justice temporary accommodation service are supported into permanent accommodation.

Eddie Hughes:

This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping this Parliament and believes everyone deserves a roof over their head.

We are working cross government and with the Ministry of Justice to address the barriers offenders face in securing suitable accommodation and are aware of the specific complex needs of women prison leavers.

The Ministry of Justice has committed over £20 million to supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation and will support individuals into long-term settled accommodation. My department secured funding at the 2020 Spending Review to support prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rented sector tenancies. The Ministry of Justice has also opened Approved Premises for women.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agricultural Products: Australia

Dr Neil Hudson:

[\[14083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of using tariff rate quotas in the Australia trade agreement in order to manage volumes of agricultural produce entering the UK market.

Greg Hands:

The Government has a range of tools at its disposal to protect UK farmers from unfair competition, including tariff rate quotas, and recognises the need to reassure farmers and rural stakeholders that the UK market access proposal will not threaten sensitive sectors.

Tariff liberalisation for sensitive goods such as beef and lamb can be staged, providing UK farmers sufficient time to adapt. The deal will also include bilateral safeguards to defend the industry against import surges.

The UK produces high quality, premium produce that is globally sought after – all the UK's new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the UK-Australia FTA, will create new export opportunities for British farming.

■ Animal Products: Imports**Dr Neil Hudson:**[\[14084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will take steps to ensure that produce from animals that have had (a) high use of antimicrobials or (b) use of growth promoters will not be permitted to enter the UK under trade deals.

Greg Hands:

All agri-food products imported into the UK under existing or future free trade agreements will, as now, have to meet the UK's food safety and other Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard requirements for imports. These include clear controls on limits of veterinary medicine residues in meat and other animal products. That will not change under any trade deal.

The UK is a world leader in the battle against antimicrobial resistance – significantly cutting use of antibiotics in farming, with sales of antibiotics for livestock reduced by 40% over the five years to the end of 2018. The UK will ensure that Antimicrobial Resistance remains a global priority by continuing to lead international policy dialogue at the highest political levels through the G7, G20 and other international and regional fora, and as a major supporter of the United Nations and wider multilateral system.

■ Beef: Australia**Caroline Lucas:**[\[13021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department will take to ensure that (a) Australian beef (i) from feedlots, (ii) injected with hormones and (iii) transported for over 24 hours will not enter the UK market as part of a UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement and (b) Australian beef imports do not undermine the UK's animal welfare standards given that those practices are illegal in the UK.

Greg Hands:

All agri-food products imported into the UK under existing or future free trade agreements (FTA) will, as now, have to comply with UK's import requirements. Hormone-treated beef is banned in the UK and will not be allowed to enter the UK market, and this will not change under any FTA.

As the Government has stated in its manifesto, in its trade negotiations the Government will not compromise on high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.

■ Poultry: Australia**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[13981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the use of unenriched cages in Australia; what assessment she has made of whether the use of such cases complies with British

standards; whether imports of those egg products will be given zero-tariff imports under a free trade agreement; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

This agreement does not create new permissions for imports from Australia. All agri-food products imported into the UK – including into Scotland – under existing or future free trade agreements will, as now, have to comply with the UK's import requirements.

As the Government has stated in its manifesto, the UK will not compromise on high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards in any trade negotiations.

■ **Sheep Meat: Australia**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department will take to ensure that (a) lamb from mulesed sheep flocks do not enter the UK as part of an Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement and (b) Australian lamb imports do not undermine the UK's animal welfare standards since that practice is illegal in the UK.

Greg Hands:

All agri-food products imported into the UK under existing or future free trade agreements will, as now, have to comply with the UK's import requirements. That will not change as part of an FTA. Australian animal welfare standards are higher, comparatively, than many countries around the world and the Australian industry has a long-standing commitment to phase out the practice of mulesing. The Government wants to see this happen.

■ **Trade Agreements**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[14104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that environmental, social and governance factors and sustainability are an integral part of the UK's future international trade deals.

Greg Hands:

Environmental, social, governance and sustainability are considerations at the heart of British trade policy, and the Government will continue to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and workers' rights by including ambitious labour and environmental provisions within new Trade Agreements.

The UK's Free Trade Agreements will facilitate trade in goods and services which support the deployment of low carbon, carbon capture, and energy efficient technology in Britain. These agreements will also underpin international cooperation in research and development, and reaffirm the UK's sovereign right to regulate in pursuit of net zero by 2050.

■ Trade Agreements: Animal Welfare**Caroline Lucas:****[13020]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish her Department's policy process which ensures that the UK's animal welfare standards are not undermined when agreeing new free trade agreements.

Greg Hands:

This Government is committed to building a transparent trade policy, which is subject to robust and appropriate parliamentary scrutiny. The Government has made and fulfilled commitments to transparency, including publishing objectives and economic scoping assessments for its proposed Free Trade Agreements. At the end of negotiations, the Government will lay a final impact assessment prior to ratification under the statutory framework provided for by the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

In all trade negotiations the Government works with industry through our Trade Advisory Groups (TAG), Strategic Trade Advisory Groups (STAG) and the Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC). The new TAC will report on whether new free trade agreements are consistent with maintaining UK statutory protections for animal and plant health, animal welfare and the environment.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia**Julian Sturdy:****[13049]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of representations from civil society groups and the general public on concerns about the inclusion of an ISDS clause in the proposed UK-Australia trade agreement; and what steps her Department is taking to review the proposed ISDS clause in light of such representations.

Greg Hands:

The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement Investment chapter will not include Investor-State Dispute Settlement. Throughout the negotiation process, the UK Government has engaged and consulted widely with a range of stakeholders on a variety of issues pertaining to this negotiation.

Further details on the agreement in principle can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

JUSTICE**■ Prisoners' Release: Females****Stephen Morgan:****[13211]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the number of female prison leavers who are homeless.

Alex Chalk:

Accommodation outcomes for 2020/21, broken down by self-declared gender, are due to be published as part of the Community Performance release due to be released in July.

We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. Initially launching in five national probation regions, the service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing this Summer. It will be in operation during the next financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally. The service will take account of the needs of women, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required.

Stephen Morgan:[\[13212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the number of female prison leavers who are homeless.

Alex Chalk:

We are committed to doing all we can to address the issues around female offending. It is vital that we do so to better protect the public and deliver more effective rehabilitation. This includes supporting women when they are leaving prison.

As part of our commitment to eliminate rough sleeping, we are working across Government with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Welsh Government and Other Government Departments, to address the barriers offenders face in securing suitable accommodation.

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The service will take account of the needs of women, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required. Community Offender Managers, working together with local partners, will be responsible for ensuring that vulnerable female prison leavers with complex needs receive appropriate support and are provided with housing beyond the 12 weeks emergency accommodation.

In 2020, Hestia Battersea was changed from a male to female Approved Premises to give better geographic spread of AP provision for women, becoming the first AP for women in London since 2008.

In addition, Eden House, the first new AP in over thirty years, will open in this month supporting female offenders.

■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[13904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to publish the next data release on homelessness for prison leavers; and what periods that data release will include.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[13905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the impact on homelessness for prison leavers of (a) the end of the temporary accommodation scheme and (b) other housing support schemes.

Alex Chalk:

We recognise that accommodation is a key priority as it is often the first step in an individual's resettlement journey. We continue to work with councils and charities to secure suitable accommodation, while investigating long-term solutions to prevent homelessness and help offenders turn their backs on crime. Accommodation outcomes for 2020/21 are due to be published as part of the Community Performance series due to be released in July.

We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. Initially launching in five national probation regions, the service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing this Summer. It will be in operation during the next financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally.

HMPPS will work in conjunction with MHCLG's announced funding to support prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rental tenancies. Funded schemes to support prison leavers will be developed to assist in securing settled accommodation by the end of the 12 weeks temporary accommodation provided by HMPPS.

■ Prisons: Visits

Paul Blomfield: [\[13043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when physical contact will be allowed between visitors and prisoners during visits as part of the easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Alex Chalk:

Whilst restrictions on physical contact are easing in the community, high-risk and closed environments like prisons, hospitals and care homes are still required to take extra measures to stop infections spreading. In England and Wales almost all establishments have now commenced delivery of Stage 3 of the [National Framework](#), which allows for social visits with social distancing and face coverings. We are working with Public Health England and Public Health Wales to look at how we can take safe and incremental steps to improve the visits experience. We are acutely aware of the impact of this on prisoners and their loved ones, but social distancing will need to continue for now for most in-person visits to protect visitors and people in prisons.

Physical contact, however, is now allowed during prison visits for children aged under 11 to reflect public health advice on their needs and the relative transmission risks for that age group. In addition, two adults from two different households can now visit together, making it easier for prisoners to see more people.

A pilot scheme has been commenced involving six prisons, allowing physical contact for visitors who can confirm that they have tested negative on the day of the visit. The information we get from this pilot will aid our national plans for the safe provision of visits.

TRANSPORT**■ Cycling and Walking****Colleen Fletcher:****[13087]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) financial and (b) other steps his Department is taking to encourage the uptake of cycling and walking in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is investing an unprecedented £2 billion in active travel schemes in England over the course of this Parliament. This is the biggest ever boost for cycling and walking. The funding will be spent on a wide range of measures, as set out in the Prime Minister's July 2020 Gear Change plan.

A total of around £143 million has been invested in cycling and walking schemes in the West Midlands and £4 million in Coventry since the introduction of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) in 2016/17. This includes £22 million active travel funding in the last financial year.

In the coming weeks the Department will invite all Combined and Local Transport Authorities to bid for Active Travel Capital Funding and announce allocations of revenue funding allocations from the Active Travel Capability Fund for the current financial year.

■ Parking**Rachael Maskell:** [\[13998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many new multi-storey car parks have received outline or detailed planning consent on Network Rail-owned land in the last five years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Eight new multi-storey car parks received outline or detailed planning consent on Network Rail owned land in the last five years.

■ Public Transport: Antisemitism**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[13039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what actions are being promoted by the British Transport Police to tackle anti-semitism on public transport.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

BTP's anti-hate crime campaign, #WeStandTogether, has been in place since 2016 and aims to educate, raise aware of hate crime and increase confidence and encourage victims of hate and intolerance to report all forms of hate, including antisemitism. BTP also works in partnership with the Community Security Trust (CST) on this campaign and signposts victims of antisemitism to them as an alternative third-party hate crime reporting organisation.

BTP carry out regular 'Hate Crime Days of Action' across the railway network, which involves an enhanced presence at stations and on the network, with a focus on raising awareness of hate and intolerance and encouraging the reporting of hate.

■ Rolling Stock: Coronavirus**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[13186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2021 to Question 49664 on Rolling Stock: Coronavirus, how many times and on what dates he or his officials have met with (a) Angel, (b) Porterbrook and (c) Ever rolling stock companies since March 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I met with Angel, Porterbrook and Eversholt to discuss rolling stock related matters on nine occasions since March 2020. Officials also have standing meetings on a monthly basis, ad-hoc meetings as required, or meetings as part of wider stakeholder groups.

■ Rolling Stock: Leasing**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[13189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the rolling stock companies on limiting the increasing costs of their operating leases; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I met with the main rolling stock companies to discuss how they can support industry and the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. These meetings, and those with officials, have included sensitive discussions around leasing arrangements, liabilities and also future opportunities that will continue to deliver benefits to passengers and the public purse alike.

TREASURY■ **Child Benefit****Martyn Day:**[\[13146\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 26 March 2021 to Question 170688 on Child Benefit, if he will make it his policy to align the threshold for payment of the High Income Child Benefit Charge in the tax year 2021-22 with the threshold at which people become higher rate taxpayers.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to managing the public finances in a disciplined and responsible way by targeting support where it is most needed. The adjusted net income threshold of £50,000 used in the administration of the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) only affects a small minority of those with comparatively high incomes. The Government therefore believes that the current threshold for HICBC remains the best option at present. As with all elements of tax policy, the Government keeps this under review as part of the annual Budget process.

■ **Corporation Tax****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[12971\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to seek parliamentary approval prior to agreeing at the OECD any proposal for a global minimum rate of corporation tax.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[12972\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the development of OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting proposals on a global minimum rate of corporation tax, what plans the Government has to seek parliamentary approval before signing a treaty or other international agreement giving effect in the UK to a global minimum rate of corporation tax.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 19 May to UIN 104.

Charlotte Nichols:[\[13238\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason he agreed to a global corporation tax rate of 15 per cent rather than 21 per cent as first proposed.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is delighted that the G7 has come together to back the proposals developed by the OECD to reform the international tax framework.

Reaching final agreement on a two-pillar solution, which reallocates taxing rights and introduces a global minimum tax, would be a major multilateral achievement that introduces stability into the international tax landscape.

The Government recognises that there is more to do to reach final agreement with the G20 and 139 members of the OECD Inclusive Framework. Compromise will be necessary to reach that final agreement, including on the level of the global minimum tax rate; a key issue which will need to take into account the position of the wide array of views across the members of the Inclusive Framework. With that consideration in mind a common G7 position has been agreed that could represent a consensus position for the G20 and Inclusive Framework.

■ Cryptocurrencies: Registration

Philip Davies: [\[13887\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 6233 on Cryptocurrencies: Regulation, what the mean length of time is in days that a company has had their application for anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration under review by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Philip Davies: [\[13888\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 6233 on Cryptocurrencies: Regulation, what the median length of time is in days that a company has had their application for anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration under review by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Philip Davies: [\[13889\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 6233 on Cryptocurrencies: Regulation, what the maximum length of time is in days that a company has had their application for anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration under review by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Philip Davies: [\[13890\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of the Financial Conduct Authority remaining the supervisor of the cryptoasset sector due to the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses.

Philip Davies: [\[13891\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority as the supervisor for the cryptoasset sector in light of the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses.

Philip Davies: [\[13892\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of expertise within the Financial Conduct Authority on the timeliness of the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration regime for cryptoasset businesses.

Philip Davies: [\[13893\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of staff turnover within the Financial Conduct Authority on the timeliness of the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration regime for cryptoasset businesses.

Philip Davies: [\[13894\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration regime for cryptoasset businesses.

Philip Davies: [\[13895\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses by the Financial Conduct Authority on the Government's objective to ensure that the UK remains the most open, competitive and innovative place to do financial services in the world.

Philip Davies: [\[13897\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses by the Financial Conduct Authority on the Government's objective to create a regulatory environment in which cryptoasset firms can innovate.

Philip Davies: [\[13898\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Government's consultation on the regulatory approach to cryptoassets and stablecoins, which closed on 21 March 2021, whether it remains the Government's policy to create a regulatory environment in which cryptoasset firms can innovate.

Philip Davies: [\[13899\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses by the Financial Conduct Authority on the international competitiveness and attractiveness of the UK.

Philip Davies: [\[13900\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the time taken to manage to the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses by the Financial Conduct Authority on consumers.

Philip Davies: [\[13901\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the time taken to manage the anti-money laundering / counter terrorist financing registration of cryptoasset businesses by the Financial Conduct Authority on the cryptoasset industry.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to retaining the UK's global leadership position in fintech by creating a regulatory environment which promotes innovation whilst maintaining the highest regulatory standards, including for anti-money and counter-terrorist financing. Having an effective anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime underpins the competitiveness of British financial services firms and the UK as a whole, by providing confidence that our financial system is clean and safe, and that new technologies can be used both reliably and safely.

Any steps taken in light of the consultation on the Government's regulatory approach to cryptoassets will aim to balance the potential risk to consumers with the ambition to foster competition and innovation in the sector.

In order to properly assess whether a cryptoasset firm meets the requirements for registration set out in the Money Laundering Regulations, the FCA are required to assess whether a firm and its officers, managers or beneficial owners are "fit and proper" with regard to the risk of money laundering or terrorist financing. The FCA are therefore assessing firms' business models holistically, and it has been necessary, in many cases, for them to request additional information from the applicant firm. A significant reason for this has been that many applications have contained insufficient information on their business mode and evidence to demonstrate that the firm meets the required standard. The application process for cryptoasset firms has therefore taken longer than originally anticipated.

The mean length of time in days that a cryptoasset firm has had their application for registration under review by the FCA is 248 days. The median length of time in days that a company has had their application for registration under review is 252 days. The maximum length of time in days that a company has had their application for registration under review is 527 days.

The Government believes that the FCA's expertise in the regulation of financial products, its membership of the Cryptoasset Taskforce, and its experience as anti-money laundering supervisor for other asset-based financial services firms makes it the right supervisor for the cryptoasset sector. As a result of the longer than anticipated time being taken to process applications, I can confirm that the FCA has increased considerably the resources allocated to assessing applications.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Karin Smyth: [\[13117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of Self Employed Income Support Scheme grants which were initially refused and subsequently awarded following a review of the application on the grounds of exceptional circumstances.

Jesse Norman:

The information requested about the number of Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grants awarded on the grounds of exceptional circumstances following a review is not held centrally by HM Revenue and Customs and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Simon Hoare: [\[14018\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the rules and timing of the tariff reimbursement scheme for goods not captured under the UK Trader Scheme; and whether that scheme will be (a) retrospective and (b) limited by state aid caps.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has committed to a tariff reimbursement scheme in the NI Command Papers and work continues to develop the scheme. Once the scheme is live, it will enable traders to be reimbursed where they are unable to draw upon the alternative mechanisms to remove tariffs, but can demonstrate after goods have moved into Northern Ireland that they have not entered and will not enter the EU. Further details of the tariff reimbursement scheme and the evidence that will be required for traders to make a claim will be set out in due course. Once arrangements are finalised, the Government will ensure they are well signposted to businesses.

■ UK Trade with EU: Small Businesses

Daisy Cooper: [\[13229\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on small and medium sized enterprises of the additional costs of (a) VAT and (b) customs charges when exporting to the EU since the end of the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement seeks to reduce the costs for traders of customs processes introduced following the end of the transition period with the EU. It supports efficient customs arrangements and ensures that goods originating in the EU or UK are not subject to tariffs. For goods that do not meet requirements of the rules of origin, tariffs still apply. Following the end of the transition period, sales from UK businesses to EU customers are exports and zero-rated for VAT purposes. This means that the UK business seller should not charge UK VAT on the sale and should retain evidence of export. In order to help businesses adapt to new requirements when trading with the EU, HMRC have launched the £20 million SME

Brexit Support Fund to support small and medium sized businesses with new customs, Rules of Origin and VAT rules. The Government has also provided extensive guidance to help businesses adapt to the new requirements.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[13230\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial assistance he has made available to small and medium sized enterprises to compensate for (a) lost revenue and (b) higher costs associated with exporting to EU countries since the end of the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement seeks to reduce the costs of customs processes for traders by supporting efficient customs arrangements covering trade in goods, while ensuring that customs authorities remain able to protect their regulatory, security and financial interests. In order to help businesses adapt to new requirements when trading with the EU, HMRC have launched the £20 million SME Brexit Support Fund to support small and medium sized businesses with new customs, Rules of Origin and VAT rules. The Government has also provided extensive guidance and support.

WALES

■ **Wales Office: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[14204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has made no assessment of artificial intelligence in respect of its responsibilities.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[14197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has been developing its own data and analytics capabilities for several years. As part of this work we have been better able to determine the specific opportunities and potential threats relating to "artificial intelligence". Ongoing assessment ensures that we develop our products and strategies using a cautious

and measured approach. We test and iterate our analytics, data and governance to meet this.

The Department does not use artificial intelligence software, predictive modelling or automated decision making software to make decisions regarding people's benefit entitlement.