



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 21 June 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:33 P.M., 21 June 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	8	CABINET OFFICE	15
ATTORNEY GENERAL	8	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	15
■ Attorney General: Freedom of Information	8	■ Earl Mountbatten of Burma: Disclosure of Information	16
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	8	■ Ministers: Conduct	16
■ Aerospace Industry: South West	8	CHURCH COMMISSIONERS	17
■ Business: Coronavirus	9	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	17
■ Carbon Emissions	9	COP26	18
■ Consumer Goods: Safety	10	■ Developing Countries: Climate Change	18
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	10	■ UN Climate Conference 2021	18
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Artificial Intelligence	11	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Young People	19
■ Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges	12	DEFENCE	20
■ Electricity Interconnectors: Renewable Energy	12	■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement	20
■ Energy: Greenhouse Gas Emissions	13	■ Armed Conflict: Civilians	21
■ Intellectual Property: EU Countries	13	■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus	21
■ Nuclear Power: Hydrogen	14	■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles	21
■ Renewable Energy: Wales	14	■ Boxer Vehicles: Procurement	22
■ Self-employed: Fraud	15	■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations	22
		■ Ministry of Defence: Artificial Intelligence	23
		■ Ministry of Defence: Scotland	24
		■ NATO: Assets	24

■ Navy: Shipping	24	EDUCATION	38
■ Royal Yacht: Procurement	24	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	38
■ United Nations: Peacekeeping Operations	25	■ Adoption Support Fund	40
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	25	■ Breakfast Clubs: Contracts for Services	41
■ BBC: Scotland	25	■ Department for Education: Artificial Intelligence	41
■ Broadband: Ceredigion	26	■ Education: Gender	42
■ Broadband: Voucher Schemes	26	■ Extracurricular Activities: Coronavirus	42
■ Camelot Group: Computer Software	26	■ Further Education Capital Transformation Fund	44
■ Camelot Group: Investment	27	■ National Association of Teachers of Religious Education: Textbooks	44
■ Camelot Group: Licensing	29	■ Office for Students: Public Appointments	45
■ Camelot Group: Marketing	29	■ Primary Education: North East	45
■ Camelot Group: National Lottery	29	■ Remote Education: Literacy	46
■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Artificial Intelligence	30	■ School Leaving: Training	47
■ Digital Technology: Learning Disability	31	■ Schools: Fire Extinguishers	47
■ Football Index	32	■ Schools: Sports	48
■ Football Index: Compensation	32	■ Schools: Standards	48
■ Gambling	33	■ Students: Loans	49
■ Museums and Galleries: Disability	33	■ Students: Mental Health Services	49
■ Music: Coronavirus	34	■ Teachers: Physical Education	51
■ Mutuels Information Service	34	■ Training: West Yorkshire	52
■ National Lottery: Charitable Donations	35	■ Training: Young People	53
■ Snooker: Coronavirus	36	■ Vocational Education: Qualifications	53
■ Television Licences: Disability	37	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	53
■ Tourism: Coronavirus	37	■ Carbon Emissions: Environment Protection	53
■ Tourism: Economic Situation	37		

■ Climate Change and Ecology	55	■ Overseas Aid: Health Professions	69
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Artificial Intelligence	55	■ Pakistan: Counter-terrorism	69
■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies	56	■ Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review	70
■ Plants: EU Countries	57	■ Rohingya	71
■ Seas and Oceans: Marine Environment	58	■ Travel: Coronavirus	71
■ Transport: Refrigeration	58	■ Tropical Diseases: Drugs	72
■ Wildlife: Smuggling	59	■ Ukraine: Corruption	72
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	59	■ UN World Conference against Racism	73
■ Bahrain: Democracy	59	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	73
■ China: Uighurs	59	■ Abortion: Drugs	73
■ Colombia: Demonstrations	60	■ Blood Cancer: Coronavirus	73
■ Commonwealth: Coronavirus	61	■ Brain: Tumours	74
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	61	■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	74
■ Developing Countries	62	■ Carers	74
■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus	62	■ Carers: Health	75
■ Developing Countries: Females	63	■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	75
■ EU Countries: LGBT People	64	■ Coronavirus	76
■ Family Planning	64	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	76
■ Gender Equality Advisory Council	64	■ Coronavirus: Screening	76
■ Liechtenstein and Switzerland: Trade Agreements	65	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	78
■ Members: Correspondence	65	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Artificial Intelligence	79
■ Myanmar: Armed Conflict	66	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence	79
■ Myanmar: Coronavirus	67	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions	79
■ Myanmar: Education	67	■ Diabetes	79
■ Nicaragua: Political Prisoners	68	■ Disability: Coronavirus	80
■ Overseas Aid	68	■ Eyes: Tumours	80
		■ Furs: Farms	80

■ Health Services	80	HOME OFFICE	95
■ Health Services: Finance	81	■ Animal Experiments: Coronavirus	95
■ Hospitals: Greater London	81	■ Asylum: Children	95
■ Hospitals: Rural Areas	81	■ Asylum: Deportation	96
■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease	82	■ Bail: Criminal Investigation	96
■ Key Workers: Parking	82	■ British Nationality and Visas	97
■ Kidney Diseases: Health Services	83	■ Hate Crime: Ethnic Groups	97
■ Long Covid: Research	84	■ Knives: Crime	98
■ Lung Diseases	84	■ Migrants: Clothing	98
■ Members: Correspondence	85	■ Migrants: Detainees	99
■ Menopause	85	■ Nature Conservation: Seized Articles	100
■ Menopause: West Midlands	85	■ Refugees: Resettlement	100
■ Mental Health Services	85	■ Retail Trade: Abuse and Violence	101
■ Mental Health Services: Greater London	88	■ Schools: Vetting	101
■ Mental Health Services: Young People	89	■ Wildlife: Smuggling	102
■ Muscular Dystrophy	89	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	102
■ Myelodysplastic Syndromes: Drugs	90	■ Building Safety Fund	102
■ NHS: Parking	90	■ Buildings: Insulation	103
■ Obesity: Children	90	■ Camping Sites: Permitted Development Rights	103
■ Pharmacy	91	■ First Time Buyers	104
■ Prostate Cancer: Nurses	91	■ First Time Buyers: Hampstead and Kilburn	104
■ Public Houses: Coronavirus	91	■ Hate Crime	105
■ Respite Care	92	■ Holiday Accommodation	105
■ Respite Care: Sefton	92	■ Housing: Insulation	106
■ Social Services: Migrant Workers	92	■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions	106
■ Social Services: Vacancies	92	■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Artificial Intelligence	107
■ Surgery: Waiting Lists	93		
■ Tourette's Syndrome	93		
■ Travel: Coronavirus	94		

■ Parking: Key Workers	107	■ Health: Disadvantaged	125
■ Permitted Development Rights	108	■ Northern Ireland Office: Artificial Intelligence	126
■ Planning: Public Consultation	108	■ Sex and Relationship Education: Northern Ireland	126
■ Planning: Transport	109	PRIME MINISTER	127
■ Private Rented Housing: Security of Tenure	109	■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing	127
■ Property Development: Carbon Emissions	110	■ Mayors	128
■ Religious Hatred: Hinduism	110	TRANSPORT	128
■ Social Rented Housing: Standards	111	■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Industrial Relations	128
■ Towns Fund	111	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment	128
■ Travellers: Caravan Sites	113	■ Large Goods Vehicles	129
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	113	■ Railways: Costs	129
■ Beef: Australia	113	■ Railways: Immigration Controls	130
■ Department for International Trade: Artificial Intelligence	115	■ Transport: Refrigeration	130
■ Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information	116	TREASURY	130
■ Exports	117	■ Aviation: Taxation	130
■ Free Trade	117	■ Building Safety Fund	131
■ Iron and Steel: Import Duties	118	■ Business: Carbon Emissions	131
■ Livestock: Australia	118	■ Business: Coronavirus	132
■ Meat Products: Australia	118	■ Companies: Coronavirus	133
■ Meat: Australia	119	■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	134
■ Overseas Trade: China	119	■ Cryptocurrencies: Registration	135
■ Trade Agreements: Australia	120	■ Debts Written Off: Coronavirus	135
■ USA: Trade Agreements	122	■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus	136
JUSTICE	123	■ Education: Finance	137
■ Magistrates	123	■ Equitable Life Assurance Society	137
■ Ministry of Justice: Artificial Intelligence	124	■ Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation	138
■ Remand in Custody	124		
NORTHERN IRELAND	125		
■ Abortion: Northern Ireland	125		

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus	138	■ Independent Case Examiner	149
■ Niramax	138	■ Jobcentres: Coronavirus	150
■ Non-domestic Rates	139	■ Kickstart Scheme	150
■ Non-domestic Rates and VAT	140	■ Local Housing Allowance	151
■ Raw Materials: Overseas Trade	140	■ Members: Correspondence	151
■ Revenue and Customs: Contracts	141	■ National Insurance Contributions	152
■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme	141	■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations	154
■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Carers	141	■ Redundancy: Government Assistance	156
■ Small Businesses	142	■ Social Security Benefits	156
■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus	142	■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals	157
■ Stamp Duty Land Tax: Fraud	143	■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification	157
■ Tourism: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	144	■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud	157
■ Travel: Coronavirus	144	■ Social Security Benefits: Long Covid	158
■ Treasury: Written Questions	145	■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses	158
WALES	146	■ Universal Credit	159
■ Immigration: EU Nationals	146	■ Universal Credit: Payments	159
■ Wales Office: Freedom of Information	146	■ Work Capability Assessment	160
WORK AND PENSIONS	147	■ Workplace Pensions	161
■ Chemicals: Regulation	147	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	162
■ Children: Maintenance	147	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	162
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Dudley	148	■ Update on Myanmar	162
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Vacancies	148	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	163
■ Discretionary Housing Payments	149	■ Progress on Large Civil Aircraft Disputes	163
■ Food Banks	149	NORTHERN IRELAND	164
		■ Northern Ireland update	164

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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Freedom of Information

Ellie Reeves:

[\[16931\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, 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.

Lucy Frazer:

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.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Aerospace Industry: South West

Jack Lopresti:

[\[15214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the contribution to environmental sustainability of the aerospace industry in the South West of England.

Paul Scully:

The South West of England is home to a large cluster of the UK's leading aerospace businesses. Its contribution to environmental sustainability of the aerospace industry is therefore significant. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently launched a new Airbus wing technology centre (AIRTeC) as part of its Wing of Tomorrow programme. This centre and research undertaken by companies such as GKN and Rolls-Royce will keep the South West at the forefront of the global move towards cleaner aviation.

As part of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the Government is investing in future green aviation across the whole of the UK. In order to accelerate this work, we have created a Jet Zero Council which brings together stakeholders spanning airlines, airports, aerospace manufacturers, fuel suppliers, academia, and environmental groups.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[16187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will bring forward plans to extend the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounce Back Business Loan Scheme repayment holiday.

Paul Scully:

We have always been clear that businesses are responsible for repaying any finance they take out. However, we recognise that some borrowers will benefit from additional flexibility with regards to their repayments. That is why we announced the Pay As You Grow measures last year.

Pay As You Grow is designed to provide Bounce Back Loan borrowers more time and flexibility over their repayments by giving them the option to:

- Extend the length of the loan from six years to ten.
- Make interest-only payments for six months, with the option to use this up to three times throughout the loan.
- Take up a six-month repayment holiday. This option is available once during the term of their loan.

Businesses will be able to use these options either individually or in combination with each other.

While the Government covers the interest due on Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) facilities for the first twelve months, repayments of capital are required during this period unless the lender chooses to grant additional forbearance measures.

CBILS lenders are able to extend the repayment period for CBILS facilities where this is needed, to a maximum of 10 years. CBILS term extensions are offered at the discretion of lenders, and for forbearance purposes only.

The British Business Bank has a range of guidance and resources available to all businesses, including content on managing cashflow and a list of independent advice services. Details can be found at: www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-hub/dealing-with-debt/.

■ Carbon Emissions

Steve Reed:

[16857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take in response to the Environmental Audit Committee's recommendations to (a) remove the barriers to community energy and (b) implement practical support measures to enable community energy to fulfil its role of engaging people and communities in net zero.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is supportive of community energy. We have responded to the Environmental Audit Committee's recommendations, our response can be viewed here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/62/environmental-audit-committee/publications/3/correspondence/>.

■ Consumer Goods: Safety**John Nicolson:****[15278]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to protect consumers from the sale of unsafe goods on online marketplaces and to recognise online marketplaces as actors within the supply chain.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to ensuring that only safe products can be sold in the UK. Product safety legislation places obligations on manufacturers, importers and distributors and this includes online retailers selling goods via marketplaces who have a duty to act with due care to ensure products they are selling are safe.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) works with colleagues in local authority Trading Standards to take action where products are identified online that do not meet the UK's product safety requirements and expects online platforms to act quickly to remove them from sale.

The OPSS is taking forward a programme of work to ensure that major online marketplaces are playing their part to protect UK consumers from unsafe goods. This includes developing a new voluntary commitment for online marketplaces to agree further actions they will take to reduce the risks from unsafe products being sold online.

Furthermore, OPSS is reviewing the UK's product safety framework to ensure that it continues to deliver safety for consumers while supporting businesses to innovate and grow. The review is considering non-traditional business models, including online sales.

In order to inform the review, OPSS instigated a Call for Evidence, which closed on 17th June, and has been carrying out extensive stakeholder engagement to capture the fullest possible range of views. A Government Response to that Call for Evidence will be issued in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Julian Sturdy:****[16096]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many covid-19 vaccine doses England has available for use in reserve supply.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The UK Government has secured early access to 397 million vaccine doses through supply agreements with six separate vaccine developers, of which four have received regulatory approval and three are currently in deployment. This includes agreements with:

- Pfizer/BioNTech for 100 million doses
- University of Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses
- Moderna for 17 million doses
- Novavax for 60 million doses
- Janssen for 20 million doses
- Valneva for 100 million doses

In addition, the Government has a reservation agreement with GlaxoSmithKline/Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses and a non-binding agreement with CureVac for 50 million doses.

We are in constant contact with the vaccine manufacturers and are confident that the supply of vaccines to the UK will not be disrupted and that we will meet the vaccination targets set out by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 14 June:

- All adults aged 18 and over to be offered a first dose by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned.
- By 19 July, all those aged over 50 and the clinically extremely vulnerable to have been offered their second dose.
- Second doses for all over 40s will be accelerated by reducing the dosing interval from 12 weeks to 8 weeks. All over 40s who received a first dose by mid-May will be offered a second dose by 19 July.

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

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[14191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Amanda Solloway:

Any spend by the Department on external facing digital services are subject to Cabinet Office digital and technology spend controls. Artificial Intelligence is treated as novel and contentious, and as such subject to additional scrutiny. This means threats associated with any application of Artificial Intelligence by the Department will be considered and assessed as part of this governance process.

In July 2020, Cabinet Office tasked all government departments to produce an Automation Blueprint. As part of this the Digital directorate within the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy identified potential opportunities for the

application of Artificial Intelligence. There are a number of projects currently being undertaken or considered by the Department, in some cases the progression will be dependent on availability of budget from next financial year. BEIS Analysts use machine learning techniques, under the umbrella of artificial intelligence, where appropriate as part of analysis supporting policy development.

■ Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges

Alan Brown:

[\[15300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2021 to Question 8657 on Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on investment in Scottish renewables of the differential created between generators in the north of Scotland paying the highest grid charges in Europe compared to interconnector imported energy with no surcharges; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK Government remains firmly committed to the renewables industry across the UK, including in Scotland. Most major investment in new renewable generation projects continues to be underpinned by Contracts for Difference (CfD) arrangements introduced by the UK Government, and for which overseas generators are not eligible to bid. Scotland has benefitted significantly from the CfD scheme – 20 of the 58 projects awarded CfDs to date are in Scotland. This represents 34% of all CfD projects and 21% of total CfD capacity (around 3.4GW of nearly 16GW awarded contracts to date).

Electricity network charging arrangements are a matter for Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator. The level of transmission network charges is set to reflect the costs that generators and consumers in different locations impose on the transmission network.

Charging arrangements are important in achieving the UK's net zero ambitions, and Ofgem is currently reviewing key aspects of those arrangements through its Access and Forward-Looking Charges Review. It plans to consult on proposals shortly.

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Renewable Energy

Alan Brown:

[\[15299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure imported electricity via interconnectors is green energy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

It is not possible to ascertain the precise generation technology of electricity imports to the UK. However, it is the case that these imports come from countries which, like the UK, have committed to decarbonising their energy systems.

By acting as a source of flexibility, interconnection can allow for the most efficient use of intermittent renewables, ensuring that excess renewable generation is exported rather than curtailed. A BEIS-commissioned study, published alongside the Energy

White Paper, utilised pan-European modelling to illustrate that an increased level of interconnection is likely to result in reduced emissions in both Britain and Europe to 2050[1]. This and other studies also suggest that, due to our considerable renewable energy potential, Britain may become a net electricity exporter over the coming decades.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-of-interconnectors-on-decarbonisation>

■ Energy: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Afzal Khan:

[15386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the IEA report entitled Net Zero by 2050, A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector; and whether his Department plans to take steps in response to its conclusions.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We welcome the IEA's Net Zero by 2050 report, which sets out a clear roadmap to net zero emissions and shares many of the priorities we have committed to in the UK's Energy White Paper and my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, as well as in our role as COP Presidency.

In addition to our existing ambitious plans, we will publish a new comprehensive Net Zero Strategy in the lead up to COP26, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy by 2050, making the most of new growth and employment opportunities across the UK.

■ Intellectual Property: EU Countries

Pete Wishart:

[16804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives from the EU to understand whether the simultaneous disclosure of unregistered designs in the UK and EU would provide protection for those designs in the UK and EU.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK sought an agreement with the EU on reciprocal disclosure for unregistered designs. This would have been beneficial to UK design businesses. However, the

EU decided to pass up the opportunity to conclude such mutually beneficial text, which is disappointing. There are no plans to revisit this issue with our EU partners.

However, the Government recognises that this is an important issue for UK designers and will consider it in our future work on the UK designs system.

■ Nuclear Power: Hydrogen

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[16272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the progress of international projects to produce green hydrogen from nuclear energy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is aware of a number of international projects to produce low carbon hydrogen from nuclear energy. International collaboration is an important part of Government's policy to successfully develop nuclear technology and Government is engaged in international initiatives such as the Clean Energy Ministerial, Mission Innovation and the Generation IV International forum where opportunities for low carbon hydrogen production from nuclear energy are being considered.

The Government welcomes the UK nuclear industry's growing ambition to support low-carbon hydrogen production and the forthcoming UK Hydrogen Strategy will provide further detail on the role of production technologies in meeting our 5GW ambition. The Strategy will set out how the UK will position itself as a leader in the production, use and export of low carbon hydrogen, alongside the export of skills, technology and expertise. It will also set out our strong ambition to collaborate with key partners. By sharing expertise, building common standards and working together to remove deployment barriers, we can expedite hydrogen's contribution to tackling climate change and creating green jobs. We look forward to engaging in more detailed discussions with overseas partners, including on nuclear-linked production, in light of the Strategy's publication.

■ Renewable Energy: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[16178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the transmission electricity network in Wales in facilitating renewable energy generation.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognises the importance of investing in electricity transmission network infrastructure to enable renewable generation to build and connect to the grid. The electricity transmission network in Wales and across Great Britain is regulated via a price control, set and administered by Ofgem, as the independent regulator. The current price control commenced on 1 April this year, and it includes £8.7bn of upfront funding for electricity transmission across Great Britain, £5.4bn (2018/19 prices) of which is allocated to National Grid Electricity Transmission which owns and operates the electricity transmission network in England and Wales. Further funding of up to £10bn for future projects to enable net zero is also available across the next price control (electricity transmission and gas), including readying the network for further renewable generation.

The UK Government remains firmly committed to the renewables industry across the UK, including in Wales. To date, Contracts for Difference (CfD) have been awarded to 5 projects in Wales, totalling around 200MW of capacity. Future CfD auctions will provide further opportunities for developers of renewable electricity projects in Wales to secure contracts and expand the amount of capacity supported by the scheme in Wales.

■ Self-employed: Fraud

Chris Stephens:

[16147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the new Single Enforcement Body is planned to have powers to (a) identify, (b) investigate, and (c) take legal action over cases of bogus of self-employment.

Paul Scully:

The Government has recently published its consultation response on the single enforcement body for employment rights which sets out the high level remit, powers, and overall approach of the new body. The full government response can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/good-work-plan-establishing-a-new-single-enforcement-body-for-employment-rights>.

The body will not specifically cover 'bogus self-employment'. Employment status is based on the reality of the relationship between an individual and the person for whom services are provided. That might not be the same as what the employment contract states. For disputes around the interpretation of employment law, which are often complex and finely balanced, it is right that Employment Tribunals have the power to determine the result, taking into consideration all of the detail of each individual case to ensure any judgment is the conclusion of a fair and transparent process.

We recognise concerns around employment status and the potential for exploitation and the Government is clear that businesses cannot simply opt out of employment rights. The Government is considering options to bring further clarity around the employment status framework, making it easier for individuals and businesses to understand which rights apply to them.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Daisy Cooper:

[16224]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when covid-19 guidance for significant life events other than weddings such as (a) christenings and (b) Bar/Bat Mitzvahs will be published.

Penny Mordaunt:

Guidance on significant life events is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) as part of the places of worship guidance, and is kept under continual review.

■ **Earl Mountbatten of Burma: Disclosure of Information****Dr Julian Lewis:****[16779]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer to Question 11456 of 5 June 2021 on the vetting of Lord and Lady Mountbatten's private diaries prior to access being given to historians, what the source is of the statement that, prior to retiring as Chief of Defence Staff in 1965, Lord Mountbatten accepted that such vetting would apply to private diaries; for what reason those diaries were not vetted prior to being (a) purchased with money from the public purse and (b) transferred to Southampton University; what work his Department carried out to support the release of those diaries to the public in the years prior to Dr Andrew Lownie's Tribunal case in 2020; and what categories of information are capable of being deemed too sensitive for publication (i) 42 years and (ii) 62 years after the deaths of Lord and Lady Mountbatten respectively.

Julia Lopez:

As the Rt. Hon. Member will be aware, there are several FOI exemptions that remain in place for historic records. As I said in my previous answer, this case is currently before the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights) and it would not be appropriate to make further comment whilst this is subject to ongoing legal proceedings.

■ **Ministers: Conduct****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[16195]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the (a) Prime Minister's and (b) Government's compliance with section 9.1 of the Ministerial Code.

Chloe Smith:

The Government throughout the pandemic has been extremely mindful of the importance of keeping both Parliament and the public informed when decisions are taken.

The Prime Minister met with the Speaker last week and agreed that Parliament will be informed as announcements are made, and that we also reach as many members of the public as possible.

The Government has provided more than 80 Covid-19 statements to Parliament since the first on 23 Jan 2020. This is in addition to the various debates in government, backbench and opposition time, oral questions, urgent questions and legislation debates.

The regulations to keep England in step 3 of the Roadmap were debated and approved by both Houses on 16 June.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:****[17737]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what assessment the Church has made of the impact on church attendance of online worship.

Andrew Selous:

Though it is too early to assess the full impact of online worship, thousands of clergy have been provided with training to use new technology to enable them to produce virtual services. The majority of parishes have also offered some form of online worship live-streaming or bespoke recordings of worship and prayers

One specific advantage of online services has been the ability to broadcast weddings and funerals online. This has enabled family and friends to join in from across the world who may have been prevented from travelling.

The decision on whether to continue with some form of online resource alongside in-person worship will be taken at a parish level, taking into account the local community and accessibility needs.

Jim Shannon:**[17738]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church is taking to (a) prevent and (b) relieve poverty.

Andrew Selous:

Through its parish and diocesan networks, the Church of England is involved in an estimated 35,000 local community projects. A 2020 survey by the National Churches Trust found that 78% of Church of England churches were involved in supporting or operating food banks. The report can be read here:

[https://www.houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org/wp-](https://www.houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/House-of-Good-AW-digital-small.pdf)

[content/uploads/2020/10/House-of-Good-AW-digital-small.pdf](https://www.houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/House-of-Good-AW-digital-small.pdf) The National Church Institutions are also investing in areas of low economic activity through strategic development funding. By the end of 2020, £56 million had been committed to areas of low economic activity through 77 projects. Of the 93 local authorities categorised by the Government as priority 1 for levelling-up, 48 contain projects receiving such funding. This is across 20 dioceses and focuses on younger generations and deprived communities in urban and rural contexts. Additional funding is also available to support parishes through lowest income communities funding and strategic transformation funding.

COP26**■ Developing Countries: Climate Change****Chris Law:**[\[13977\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of appointing a loss and damage champion to help identify the potential suffering caused by climate change.

Alok Sharma:

In November 2020, the Rt. Hon. Anne Marie Trevelyan was appointed by the Prime Minister as the UK's International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency. In this role she is actively promoting work on adaptation and building resilience, which includes activities to avert, minimise and address loss and damage.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021**Rachael Maskell:**[\[13141\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he will take to involve all the regions of the UK in the COP26 summit.

Alok Sharma:

We are committed to ensuring an inclusive, whole of society COP26, representative of all of the UK. This will be a key objective as we select organisations to be represented in the Green Zone and on the UK Pavilion. Through our domestic 'Together for our Planet' campaign we are building awareness and understanding of COP26 across the UK, giving people the chance to get involved in the run-up to the Summit. For example, we recently ran our Creative Earth art competition inviting young people from around the UK to design artwork setting out their vision for the planet, and the winners will be showcased at COP26 in November. We have also encouraged stakeholders who would like to be involved in events or showcasing in UKG managed spaces at COP26 to submit bids through an Expression of Interest process, and we have received proposals from stakeholders from across the UK.

We are working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure an inclusive and ambitious summit for the whole of the UK. All parts of the UK will have important roles to play in ensuring the summit's success. I have invited climate change Ministers from the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to participate in a regular devolved administrations Group to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 in support of the delivery of an inclusive and welcoming COP26. The third meeting was held last week.

I also chair the COP26 UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council with mayors and local leaders from across the UK. The most recent meeting was on 15 March. Additionally, we work closely with several Non-State Actor organisations such as UK100 to further engage with local leaders.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Young People

John McNally:

[\[13109\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) the Youth Action on climate Change All-Party Parliamentary Group and (b) other youth groups can engage digitally with the activities of COP26.

Alok Sharma:

All over the world, young people are leading the charge against climate change, whether through advocating climate action, or developing climate solutions. This is why we are committed to amplifying young people's voices on the road to and at COP26 in Glasgow, this November.

The Cabinet Office's dedicated youth and civil society team host regular online open calls for civil society and youth organisations to hear the latest planning developments for the conference. We would welcome the participation of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Action Against Climate Change at these meetings.

The contact to join is rebecca.thurston@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. We have also established the COP26 Civil Society and Youth advisory council, where young activists, NGOs, indigenous peoples and faith groups are very much part of our conversations in planning COP26. Which I chair alongside Elizabeth Wathuti, a 25-year-old climate activist from Kenya, and Bella Lack, an 18-year-old climate activist from the UK.

In addition, this month we are proud to have launched the Together for Our Planet Schools Pack, designed to engage students on climate action, encourage conversations about tackling climate change, and help students learn more about the COP26 summit in Glasgow this year.

John McNally:

[\[13110\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that young people, such as those involved in the all-party Parliamentary group on Youth Action Against Climate Change, are adequately engaged in the run up to COP26 in line with target 13.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Alok Sharma:

We have established a dedicated COP26 youth engagement team in the Cabinet Office who are coordinating the UK Government's strategy to ensure youth voices are heard at COP26. We are harnessing young people's expertise through the COP26 civil society and youth advisory council, which I chair alongside Elizabeth Wathuti, a 25-year-old climate activist from Kenya, and Bella Lack, an 18-year-old climate activist from the UK.

In addition, this month we are proud to have launched the Together for Our Planet Schools Pack, designed to engage students on climate action, encourage conversations about tackling climate change, and help students learn more about the COP26 summit in Glasgow this year.

Internationally, we are working hard to champion and amplify youth voices from across the world, particularly those on the frontline of climate change, including through our regular engagements with Mock COP26 and YOUNGO (official youth constituency to the UNFCCC).

On the road to COP26, we are working on two youth events, including Italy's 'Youth4Climate2021: Driving Ambition' event held in Milan this September and YOUNGO's sixteenth Conference of Youth event held in Glasgow this October.

DEFENCE

■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[16028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 12965 on Ajax Vehicles: Procurement, on what dates the Ajax Scout Gateway Reviews 1, 2 and 3 took place.

Jeremy Quin:

Following the preparation of an answer to the right hon. Member's Question on the timing of the Ajax Scout Gateway Reviews 1, 2 and 3, further questions have come to light and further work is required to provide a comprehensive answer.

Ajax has been a protracted programme and Ministers have asked the MOD Permanent Secretary to commission an urgent review into the governance steps taken and associated records.

I will write to the right hon. Member in due course with a comprehensive answer to his question, and I will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

As part of this review of the historic governance record a confirmatory check will be undertaken for any references being made to vibration issues prior to December 2019.

Further to my answer of 14 June 2021 to the right hon. Member's Question 12965 I wish to inform him that at the request of Ministers the MOD Permanent Secretary has also commissioned a Health and Safety Review on actions taken on the project since December 2019 (and any pertinent prior events) to confirm the timeline, actions taken and ongoing work.

The vibration trials at Millbrook Proving Ground to which I made reference in the same Question response are ongoing but I have been updated that we will start to receive data in July and August this year with a final report expected to be delivered in September.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[16274\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the (a) likelihood of future changes being required to the (i) vehicles and (ii) hulls of AJAX armour fighting vehicles and (b) what options are available for funding those future changes.

Jeremy Quin:

Testing is ongoing and therefore it is too early to say whether alterations may be required to the vehicles and hulls of Ajax. Our contract with General Dynamics for the delivery of Ajax is a firm price contract.

■ Armed Conflict: Civilians**Alyn Smith:**[\[16958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Minister in his Department is responsible for the implementation of the UK Government's Protection of Civilians policy.

James Heappey:

Within the Ministry of Defence, the Protection of Civilians policy is the responsibility of the Minister for the Armed Forces. This forms an important part of the Department's Human Security policy.

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[16801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 12970, how many servicemen and servicewomen have had to self-isolate during the covid-19 outbreak to date.

James Heappey:

All 24 Service personnel who tested positive for COVID-19, or who were identified as close contacts in Mali, self-isolated with no adverse effect on UK operational output.

More generally, all defence personnel who test positive, or are identified as a close contact, are required to self-isolate in line with guidance issued by Public Health England.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles**Stuart Anderson:**[\[14216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK's armoured vehicle capability can withstand threats posed by hostile states.

Jeremy Quin:

The objective of the Army's modernisation programme is to create a fleet of, digitised platforms able to deal with future challenges that will adapt to emerging threats through iterative enhancements and upgrades.

Modernised Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFV), networked and integrated into a wider system that includes precision deep fires, air defence, and layered Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), will transform the way we fight and provide the necessary core for a world-class, credible force especially when we work alongside our NATO allies and partners. Significant additional investment is being made into AFVs including in capabilities designed to enable them to deal with threats posed by hostile states.

■ Boxer Vehicles: Procurement

Chris Evans: [\[15224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's contract for the Boxer programme included technical data packages.

Chris Evans: [\[15225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's contract for the procurement of new extended-range Chinook helicopters included technical data packages.

Chris Evans: [\[15226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's contract for the procurement of new Apache helicopters included technical data packages.

Chris Evans: [\[15227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's contract for the procurement of Ajax vehicles included technical data packages.

Chris Evans: [\[15228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's contract for the procurement of Typhoon aircraft included technical data packages.

Jeremy Quin:

A range of technical information is required as part of the Department's procurement process for equipment. This may include, for example, technical publications, operating and systems manuals to ensure that equipment can be safely operated, maintained and configured through life.

The contract for the Boxer procurement contains provisions for technical data packages and for Ajax includes Interactive Electronic Technical Publications for all Ajax variants.

The purchase of 14 new Extended Range Chinook and 50 Apache AH-64E helicopters is being made through Foreign Military Sales (FMS) arrangements with the US Government. The FMS cases include the provision of technical publications and services.

Typhoon procurement is delivered through the collaborative international Eurofighter programme between the UK, Germany, Italy and Spain; the UK has taken delivery of all its Typhoon aircraft. The procurement and support contracts include provision of the necessary technical information to support operation, maintenance and configuration of the aircraft through life.

■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[16029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 12970 on Mali: Peacekeeping Operations, (a) how many cases of covid-19

among personnel involved in the UK Task Force in Mali resulted in hospitalisations (b) how many vaccines had been administered by 31 March 2021.

James Heappey:

In relation to Service personnel deployed with the UK Task Force in Mali: there have been no COVID-19 cases that required hospitalisation; and by 31 March 2021, 100% of those eligible had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and none had at that time received a second dose. Additionally, a small number of personnel received a COVID-19 vaccine in advance of their age group becoming eligible to avoid vaccine wastage.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[16803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether troops self-isolating in Mali were replaced as Battle Casualty Replacements.

James Heappey:

Those Service personnel who self-isolated following a positive COVID-19 test, or having been identified as a close contact, were not replaced as battle casualties.

There has been no impact on the UK's operational outputs in Mali due to the self-isolation of UK Service personnel. The UK has met its commitment to all UN taskings in service of MINUSMA (the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali) and in providing heavy lift support to Operation BARKHANE (the French-led multinational counter-terrorist operation in the Sahel).

■ **Ministry of Defence: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[14205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Jeremy Quin:

As critical enabling technologies AI and Autonomy will be essential to defence modernisation enabling our Armed Forces to gain increased range, persistence and mass; better, quicker decision making; and a more effective allocation of resources. It is imperative that we move quickly to secure the benefits of these transformative technologies, and we will publish an AI Strategy later this year (including an ethical framework for the responsible use of AI in Defence) to drive and cohere efforts.

We are also closely monitoring AI-related threats - whether those posed by the capabilities which our adversaries are developing or threats to the operation of our own AI systems, which must be addressed if we are to ensure safe and responsible use of this technology. The new Defence AI Centre will serve as the nucleus to accelerate UK Defence development and exploitation of these technologies, testing and validating new and novel AI capabilities and delivering scalable solutions to meet threats.

■ Ministry of Defence: Scotland

Chris Law: [\[16137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civil service jobs (a) his Department and (b) its agencies had located in Scotland in (i) March 2011 and (ii) in the latest period for which figures are available.

Leo Docherty:

As at March 2011 there were 5,550 Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian jobs located in Scotland.

The latest published figures confirm that as at 1 April 2020 there were 3,970 MOD civilian jobs located in Scotland.

The figures are full time equivalent and are based on the personnel station location. The March 2011 data includes c104 Meteorological Office personnel. However, as the Meteorological Office has since ceased to be a part of MOD, these are not included in the April 2020 data.

■ NATO: Assets

Drew Hendry: [\[16149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a copy of the letter sent by the former Minister of State to the Armed Forces to the former Hon. Member for Moray referred to in Official Report, HC Deb, 26 July 2000, vol 354, column 677W on UK/NATO shared assets across the UK and the location of these assets by region.

James Heappey:

In light of the passage of time we have not been able to locate the letter.

■ Navy: Shipping

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[16802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the process is for naming Navy ships after members of the Royal Household.

Jeremy Quin:

All names for Royal Navy vessels are initially considered by the Ships' Names and Badges Committee who take into account a wide range of factors, including history, battle honours, national and international resonance and the engendering of Service pride. Proposed names are then submitted to the Secretary of State for Defence who determines which names are forwarded for final approval by the Monarch.

■ Royal Yacht: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[16799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government has plans for the successor to the Royal Yacht Britannia to bear the name of the Royal Household.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Name of the National Flagship will be announced in due course.

■ **United Nations: Peacekeeping Operations**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[16977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of military spending is spent on UK contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

James Heappey:

In the financial year 2019-20, the UK expenditure on Defence's operational contributions to UN Peacekeeping was £29.3million, which equates to 6.2% of total expenditure on operations. This includes the deployment of contingent troops to Cyprus and Somalia, residual costs from the drawdown in South Sudan, net additional costs to prepare for the deployment to Mali, and the deployment of individual Military Staff Officers to seven UN Peacekeeping missions in total.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **BBC: Scotland**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[15396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has entered into any memoranda of understanding with the Scottish (a) Government and (b) Parliament on the (i) operation of the BBC and (ii) appointment to the BBC's Board of Governors.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK Government has not entered into a memoranda of understanding with the Scottish government or parliament in relation to the operation of the BBC, or appointments to the BBC Board.

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent of government, and the UK government has no say in the BBC's day-to-day operations. The BBC Charter requires the BBC to represent, reflect and serve audiences, taking into account the needs of diverse communities of all the UK nations and regions, including Scotland. The BBC Board is responsible for ensuring the BBC delivers these Charter obligations.

The Chair and Nations Members of the BBC Board are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, via Order in Council, following a fair and open competition. This includes the BBC Board Member for Scotland. As per the BBC Charter, no appointment shall be made for the BBC Board member for Scotland without the agreement of the Scottish Ministers.

All other appointments are made by the BBC.

■ Broadband: Ceredigion**Ben Lake:** [\[16190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many premises in Ceredigion attempted to register for the Broadband Upgrade Fund but were deemed ineligible for that Fund.

Matt Warman:

All visitors to the Broadband Upgrade Fund were encouraged to check their eligibility using a postcode tool on the home page. This instantly confirmed whether or not they were eligible. Only those who were deemed eligible were then able to register their interest through the site. Address details for ineligible premises were not collected so we are unable to confirm how many Ceredigion residents and businesses used the postcode tool and were deemed ineligible.

We do know that across all Broadband Upgrade Fund Pilot areas, a total of 17,717 premises were checked that were not eligible. This is reflective of the fact that the Broadband Upgrade Fund Pilot attracted significant media attention from outlets with a cross regional and national audience.

■ Broadband: Voucher Schemes**Ben Lake:** [\[16192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 12253 on Broadband: Voucher Schemes, what length of time his Department defines as a reasonable timeframe for premises to benefit from a commercially delivered gigabit programme.

Matt Warman:

At the start of Project Gigabit we are prioritising areas that are not likely to receive commercial rollout, to ensure that the £5bn investment supports those communities that will otherwise not have access to gigabit capable connections.

Therefore, the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) currently excludes premises that are likely to benefit from commercial plans. As Project Gigabit develops, assessments of commercial plans will continue to be made at a local level as part of the Project Gigabit pre-procurement processes (Open Market Review and Public Review). These processes will be used by the Department to determine whether commercial plans will deliver to premises within a reasonable time frame and define what that time frame is.

■ Camelot Group: Computer Software**Alex Sobel:** [\[15381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 4020 on National Lottery: Computer Software, if he will publish the findings of all monitoring work undertaken by the Gambling Commission since 2010.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Gambling Commission is the independent regulator of the National Lottery and one of its statutory duties is to ensure that the interests of all players are protected, alongside ensuring the National Lottery is run with due propriety and that returns to good causes are maximised.

Monitoring is therefore an ongoing process and the Gambling Commission has undertaken an extensive amount of work in this area since 2010. As a result, it is not possible to collate and publish this information in its entirety.

The Gambling Commission publishes details of significant regulatory decisions and the rationale supporting those decisions on its website here:

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/about-us/guide/licence-to-run-the-national-lottery>.

In addition, wider data and research relating to the National Lottery, such as statistics around participation rates, can be found on the Gambling Commission's website here:

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/about-us/statistics-and-research>.

■ Camelot Group: Investment**Alexander Stafford:****[14098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times Camelot UK Lotteries Limited has requested an investment from the National Lottery Distribution Fund since the start of its third license in 2009; and what the (a) purpose of each investment proposal (b) outcome of each application was.

Alexander Stafford:**[14099]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the £65.3m National Lottery Distribution Fund investment awarded to Camelot UK Lotteries Limited in March 2021 was spent on marketing for the (a) Lotto, (b) EuroMillions, (c) Set for Life and (d) National Lottery brands.

Alexander Stafford:**[14100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how his Department has measured the return on investment of the £25m National Lottery Distribution Fund investment awarded to Camelot UK Lotteries Limited in July 2020.

Alexander Stafford:**[14101]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how his Department measured the return on investment of the £12.1m National Lottery Distribution Fund investment awarded to Camelot UK Lotteries Limited in August 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The National Lottery is regulated by the Gambling Commission. The operator is permitted to seek joint investments in line with Condition 23 of Section 5 of the Third National Lottery Licence.

Details of requests for joint investments, the Commission's decisions in response and the rationale supporting those decisions can be found on the Commission's website.

In addition the Gambling Commission has provided the following information. In March 2021 the Commission approved a proposal from the operator for joint investment in National Lottery marketing of £69.4 million (£65.3 million of this was investment from the National Lottery Distribution Fund), with this being allocated as follows:

- £25.7 million to support an investment in marketing of the National Lottery brand. This will be invested to support the long-term health of the National Lottery by driving positivity, loyalty and an emotional connection to the brand.
- £37.3 million to support an investment in marketing of Lotto and EuroMillions.
- £6.4 million to support an investment in marketing of Set for Life.

This approval was granted having considered the Commission's statutory duties in relation to the National Lottery. Specifically, the Commission identified no material risks to its two primary duties regarding propriety and players Interests and has a high level of assurance that the proposal will be beneficial in relation to maximising returns to good causes, particularly over the long-term.

The two investments referenced (in WPQ 14100 and 14101) focus on additional marketing to support the National Lottery brand. Specifically, the investments were targeted to support the long-term health of the National Lottery by driving positivity, loyalty and an emotional connection to the brand.

For each investment of this nature, the Commission undertakes a robust analytical assessment, as well as negotiation with the operator to ensure the best possible deal for good causes. The performance of such investments is then monitored by the Commission regularly after implementation. For brand investments, this is achieved through:

- Assessing extensive econometric analysis developed by the operator, which is subsequently assured externally and provides evidence of the positive impact of the investment on returns to good causes in the short term.
- Monitoring a wider range of key performance indicators, which provides evidence of the positive impact of the investment on the National Lottery brand over the longer term.

This evidence suggests that the return on investment has been positive in the short term, and that benefits have also been driven over the longer term.

■ Camelot Group: Licensing

Alexander Stafford:

[14087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much Camelot UK Lotteries Ltd undertook to generate for good causes when it was awarded its third licence in 2007; and how much was generated for good causes up until the expiry of the original term of the third license on 1 February 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Government does not hold figures relating to bids for the third licence to operate the National Lottery.

The National Lottery Commission awarded the third licence to the operator which was assessed as being the most likely to maximise returns to good causes, and able to run the National Lottery with due propriety and to protect the interests of participants.

Further information on how awarding of the third licence was conducted can be found in the National Lottery Commission's report on the third licence competition published in 2008. The report can be accessed [here](#).

My answer to your question on 14 May 2021 (PQ1419), gives a breakdown of good cause income for each year of the National Lottery's operation.

■ Camelot Group: Marketing

Alexander Stafford:

[14096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times Camelot UK Lotteries Limited has requested an increase in the marketing budget from the Gambling Commission since 2010.

Mr John Whittingdale:

In order to fund additional investments where costs cannot be recouped within the licence period, the National Lottery operator is permitted to seek joint investments in accordance with the provisions of Condition 23 of the Licence. Details of all substantive recent requests for joint investments, the Gambling Commission's decisions in response and the rationale supporting those decisions can be found on the Commission's website at

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/about-us/guide/licence-to-run-the-national-lottery>

with similar information for game-specific investments being provided on the relevant pages which can be accessed from that central location.

■ Camelot Group: National Lottery

Alex Sobel:

[15382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Gambling Commission made of the impact on (a) the National Lottery and (b) competition

for the next licence of renewing Camelot UK Lotteries Limited licence in June 2020 to run the National Lottery.

Alex Sobel: [15383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Gambling Commission made of Camelot UK Lotteries Limited's performance and delivery before the decision was taken to extend its licence in June 2020.

Alex Sobel: [15384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what checks were put in place by the Gambling Commission to ensure the National Lottery was not causing harm to consumers before it extended Camelot UK Lotteries Limited's licence in June 2020.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The third National Lottery licence contains a provision which allows the Gambling Commission, as the sector regulator, to extend the duration of this Licence for a period of six months. A maximum of two extensions are permitted.

The Gambling Commission decided to enact the first six-month extension to the third licence, due to the impact of the pandemic on the fourth National Lottery licence competition. The licence was extended on existing terms of the Third National Lottery licence. More information can be found on their website, [here](#).

The third National Lottery licence requires the operator to implement player protection strategies to prevent underage and excessive play which must be approved by the Gambling Commission.

The Gambling Commission then adopts a variety of measures to monitor, assess and challenge the National Lottery operator's player protection performance. This includes detailed monitoring to identify risks to players, and where appropriate, undertaking strategic reviews of areas of the portfolio which are identified as higher (but not necessarily high) risk.

The Gambling Commission is also responsible for approving proposed changes to National Lottery games where it carries out thorough assessments of National Lottery game change proposals in line with its statutory duties, including ensuring that such proposals do not present risks from a player protection perspective.

Evidence from the latest (2018) Health Survey for England shows that National Lottery games were associated with the lowest rates of problem gambling of all gambling products considered.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Artificial Intelligence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [14192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Matt Warman:

The Government is aware of a broad range of views on the potential of artificial intelligence but is also informed of the technology's risks and threats.

The Office for AI (a joint DCMS and BEIS unit) commissioned GDS to conduct a root-and-branch review of AI adoption in the public sector, to identify opportunities to increase productivity and service quality through the application of AI and related technologies.

The findings of the review revealed that leaders across the public sector could benefit from better understanding the technology, the opportunities it presents and the limitations of its use. A guide to using artificial intelligence in the public sector was published to meet this need, drawing on best practice from the commercial sector and public sector.

Accompanying the AI Guide are the Guidelines on AI Procurement co-published in collaboration with the World Economic Forum Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These guidelines will inform and empower buyers in the public sector, helping them to evaluate suppliers, then confidently and responsibly procure AI technologies for the benefit of citizens.

Furthermore, the Office for AI, co-published with the Central Digital & Data Office, the Ethics, Transparency and Accountability Framework for Automated Decision-Making. This is a seven-point framework - aimed at civil servants - to help government departments use automated or algorithmic decision-making systems safely, sustainably and ethically.

To help identify and address the risks and threats of AI the government commissioned the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation to review the risks of bias in algorithmic decision-making. The review, which was published at the end of last year, identified a number of potential areas for further action, and I'm pleased that progress has already been made on a number of them.

As we look to 'Build Back Better' from the pandemic the government is committed to improving vital public services and driving efficiencies across the public sector through the ethical, safe and trustworthy deployment of responsible AI. Later this year we will publish a new National AI Strategy to help us achieve that ambition. I am pleased that officials from across the civil service and the wider public sector have been contributing to the strategy's development.

■ Digital Technology: Learning Disability**Colleen Fletcher:****[16131]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the role of the digital divide in loneliness and social isolation amongst people with learning disabilities in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle the digital divide for people with a learning disability.

Caroline Dinenage:

During the pandemic, the ability to connect online has supported many people to maintain social connections. However some people, including some people with learning disabilities, have faced barriers such as access to mobile technology and the internet, or a lack of skills and confidence.

Data from the 2019/20 Community Life Survey shows that people with a limiting long-term illness or disability were more likely to feel lonely often or always than those without (14% compared with 4%). The survey does not ask whether people have a learning disability, so we do not hold data on levels of loneliness for this specific group.

The Office for National Statistics recently published a report on levels of loneliness during Covid-19 at local authority level, which is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/mappinglonelinessduringthecoronaviruspandemic/2021-04-07>

Currently, we do not have data at local authority level which relates specifically to people with learning disabilities.

The Government is tackling the digital divide for adults with learning disabilities through our £2.5m Digital Lifeline fund. This fund is providing tablets, data and free digital support to over 5,000 people with learning disabilities who would otherwise find it difficult to get online. The fund is enabling people to connect with friends, family, services and support groups, as well as pursue hobbies and interests.

So far 394 devices have been distributed to local delivery partners and centres in the West Midlands and 31 in the Coventry District.

Football Index**Gavin Robinson:****[16862]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the Government's inquiry into the collapse of the Football Index.

Mr John Whittingdale:

As outlined in my Written Ministerial Statement of 7 June, the Secretary of State has appointed Malcolm Sheehan QC to lead the independent review of the Football Index gambling product and we have published its scope and terms of reference on gov.uk.

That independent review is underway and is expected to provide a report for publication in the summer. The statement can be found at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-06-07/hcws63>

Football Index: Compensation**Hilary Benn:****[15169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to compensate people who have lost money as a result of the collapse of Football Index.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Secretary of State has appointed Malcolm Sheehan QC to lead the independent review of the Football Index gambling product and we have published its scope and terms of reference on gov.uk. This review is entirely separate from the ongoing administration proceedings, which are looking at assets and liabilities of the company and recompense to customers. As I said in my Written Ministerial Statement of 7 June, the independent review will be conducted and report in such a way as to avoid prejudicing that process and the Gambling Commission's ongoing regulatory investigation. The statement can be found at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-06-07/hcws63>

■ Gambling**Carolyn Harris:****[14179]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Gambling Commission on GB licensed operators and suppliers profiting from remote gambling consumers in jurisdictions where gambling is a prohibited activity.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Gambling Commission does not determine whether gambling activities are legal in other jurisdictions. To do so would involve directing resources to apply and interpret the laws and legislation of different jurisdictions. It is the responsibility of the relevant authorities in those jurisdictions to make such a determination and take any necessary action.

However, all licensees of the Gambling Commission are subject to reporting requirements associated with their activities in other jurisdictions, including reporting where they are subject to any legal or regulatory investigation. Operators are expected to comply with the law, both in the UK and in other jurisdictions in which they, or related companies, operate. Failure to meet this expectation may raise questions about operators' continuing suitability as licence holders.

The Gambling Commission does work in close cooperation with regulators in a wide range of jurisdictions and will share regulatory information where this is appropriate and legally permissible.

■ Museums and Galleries: Disability**Stephen Farry:****[15445]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage museums and galleries to provide virtual tours to better provide for people with accessibility challenges.

Stephen Farry:**[15446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of museums and galleries that provide virtual tours to better provide for people with accessibility challenges.

Caroline Dinenage:

This Government is deeply committed to ensuring that everyone, no matter their background or geographic location, can experience and enjoy the brilliant collections and benefits that our national and regional museums bring.

Museums operate independently from the Government, and the provision of virtual tours is an operational matter for museums, it is therefore up to each museum to determine whether this is something they wish to provide.

However, many choose to do so to increase access to their collections, particularly during recent lockdowns. We know that 61% of museums have digitised up to 50% of their collection, with half of those with a digitised collection having made some of it available online. The government provides support for such activities through project funding available through its arms length bodies such as Arts Council England as well as development initiatives to improve digital skills and capability of cultural organisations like the Digital Culture Network. The DCMS-Sponsored Museums increased their digital presence during the recent lockdown, offering online events and exhibitions, and many now offer virtual tours of their collections.

■ Music: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:****[13132]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether, from 21 June 2021, outdoor singing can take place, including for choirs.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

Following the move to Step 3 on 17 May, non-professional groups of up to six people can now sing indoors, in line with the rule of 6 applying to many other indoor activities and gatherings. They can also perform or rehearse in groups of up to 30 outdoors, or in multiple groups of 30 outdoors provided the groups are kept separate throughout the activity, in line with other large events that follow the [organised events guidance for local authorities](#).

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review. Further detail on Step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

■ Mutuels Information Service**Mr Steve Baker:****[13938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason his Department has abolished the Mutuels Unit.

Mr Steve Baker:

[13939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support public service mutuals and co-operatives within the public sector; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reestablishing the Mutuals Support Programme.

Matt Warman:

In recent years we have made a significant investment in the development of public service mutuals. We delivered a number of targeted support programmes, such as the Government's Mutual Support Programme 2. We have also commissioned external research projects on Mutuals, the findings of which will be published shortly.

We have published tools and resources which replicate a number of the technical and legal consultancy services provided through the Government's Mutual Support Programme 2. These will enable organisations and departments to explore mutualisation independently, where it aligns with their public service reform agendas.

These targeted programmes were always intended to be time limited and came to an end as of March 2020, and at this time the Mutuals Team, which led these programmes, was also disbanded. While we no longer have a team focused specifically on mutuals, we continue to be supportive of this model and will maintain an interest as part of our wider social enterprise agenda.

■ National Lottery: Charitable Donations

Alexander Stafford:

[14102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of funds generated by Camelot UK Lotteries Limited (a) draw-based and (b) scratchcard sales is allocated to good causes.

Mr John Whittingdale:

In 2019/20, the most recent period for which figures are fully audited, an average of 31% of the income from draw-based games sales were allocated to good causes.

This figure includes both retail sales and online sales. The latter give a higher proportion of their proceeds to good causes (an average of 35%) as retailer commission is not paid.

In the same period, 9% of the income from scratchcards games sales were allocated to good causes. Scratchcards and draw-based games are different products, and complement each other. Part of the appeal of scratchcards and online instant win games for players is the increased likelihood of winning a prize. Although scratchcards return less of a proportion of revenue to good causes than draw-based games, the volume of sales means that a significant amount of money is raised for good causes through scratchcards.

For the same period, 48% of draw-based games sales were paid out to players in prizes, while 68% of scratchcards sales were paid out to players in prizes.

12% Lottery Duty is paid on all National Lottery games.

■ Snooker: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[13228]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the legal position is that informed the decision to exclude fans who were (a) under 18 years old, (b) vulnerable adults and (c) pregnant from the World Snooker Championship that took place at Sheffield Crucible Theatre from 17 April to 3 May 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

The [Ministerial Direction](#) for the World Snooker Championships relaxed a number of Covid restrictions, including rules on capacity limits culminating in up to 4,000 people at an indoor seated venue for the Final.

For each pilot event a Public Sector Equality Duty impact assessment was carried out to consider the impact of this scientific study on groups with protected characteristics, including under 18s, those with disabilities, and pregnant people.

Under 18s were excluded from the World Snooker Championship as participants were asked to consent on the basis of the increased risk of COVID 19 transmission due to the relaxation of some risk mitigation factors (social distancing and capacity limits). It was considered that the disproportionate impact on under 18s not attending was justified.

It was considered that [those defined as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable](#), including those who are disabled or pregnant may have been more at risk where the restrictions on social distancing and capacity limits were removed. The Science Board agreed that given the nature of the pilot programme it would not be possible to permit clinically vulnerable people to safely participate. The disproportionate impact of clinically vulnerable people not attending was considered justified on the basis that the policy only applies to pilot events in the programme.

Throughout the Events Research Programme (ERP) processes have been reviewed and adapted. After the World Snooker Championship, following stakeholder consultation and feedback from a number of disability groups, the ERP Science Board reviewed the approach of the ERP with respect to [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable](#) individuals attending pilot events. The current position is that the decision to attend an ERP pilot event lies with the individual. All attendees are required to fill out a consent form as part of the sign up process for the research programme. This takes into account the increased risk of COVID 19 transmission due to the relaxation of some risk mitigation factors (including removing social distancing).

Although those under the age of 16 may be competent to agree to provide consent to medical treatment (known as Gillick competence), the Programme's Science Board has recommended that most ERP events will not allow under 16s.

■ **Television Licences: Disability**

Olivia Blake:

[\[17027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of offering free TV licences to people who live at home and receive full time care.

Mr John Whittingdale:

TV Licence concessions are available to people who are registered blind or severely sight impaired, and people living in qualifying residential care who are disabled or over 60 years old. The BBC also has responsibility for the over 75s concession which it has restricted to those on pension credit.

There are no further concessions available for people with disabilities or other health conditions, and we are not considering making changes to the current concessions regime at this time.

■ **Tourism: Coronavirus**

Neale Hanvey:

[\[16231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the total value is of Government support made available to (a) the tourism sector and (b) travel agencies sector in (i) grants, (ii) loans and (iii) tax breaks to assist in their recovery from the covid-19 outbreak since the start of that outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the severe impact of COVID-19 on tourism, and have published the Tourism Recovery Plan to help the sector recover back to pre-pandemic levels and build back better for the future. The plan aims to recover domestic tourism to pre pandemic levels by 2022 and international tourism by 2023 - both at least a year faster than independent forecasts predict. The government will continue to engage with industry bodies, consumer groups, and businesses in the travel sector regularly – such as the Association of British Travel Agents, the Association of Independent Tour Operators and UKInbound – to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the sector and support the sector's recovery from the pandemic.

■ **Tourism: Economic Situation**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[16866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the total net economic effect of overseas tourists visiting (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last five years; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the contribution of overseas tourism to the economy in those areas.

Nigel Huddleston:

VisitBritain is responsible for collecting data regarding the volume and value of inbound visits to the regions and nations of Great Britain, including the West

Midlands. In 2019, inbound visitors made 2.43m visits to the West Midlands, with a total expenditure of £1.05bn. In 2018, they made 2.2m visits to the region, spending £957.36m; in 2017, 2.33m, spending £896.78m; in 2016, 2.22m, spending £915.72m; and in 2015, 2.11m visits, spending £873.68m.

England as a whole received 36.11m inbound visits in 2019, with visitors spending £24.78bn. In 2018, it received 35.04m visits, with visitors spending £23.12bn. In 2017, 36.17m visits were made to England, spending £24.94bn. In 2016, 34.52m visits were made, spending £22.54bn, and in 2015, inbound visitors made 32.57m visits, spending £21.15bn.

Due to low sample sizes, it is not possible to provide an estimate of the economic impact of overseas visitors to Coventry.

VisitBritain data on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the contribution of overseas tourism to the economy in the areas mentioned is not yet available, though VisitBritain will continue to collect and publish these data sets.

More widely, the government recognises the significant impact of COVID-19 on inbound tourism with, for example, inbound flight arrivals to the UK down around 90% on 2019 levels for much of 2020 and into 2021. The government has published a Tourism Recovery Plan which sets a framework to recover inbound visitor numbers and spend to 2019 levels by the end of 2023 – two years faster than independent forecasts predict. The Plan sets out government support for the tourism sector, including the allocation of at least £19 million to domestic and international marketing activity.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Matt Vickers:

[901520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help schools improve (a) canteens, (b) playgrounds and (c) other facilities.

Gavin Williamson:

The Department allocates condition funding each year to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of their estates, including canteens, playgrounds and other facilities. We have allocated £11.3 billion in condition funding since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed in this financial year. As part of that, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has been allocated over £1.3 million this financial year to invest in improving the condition of its schools. Allocations are informed by consistent data on the condition of the school estate.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced a new, ten-year School Rebuilding Programme in June 2020, which will replace poor condition school buildings with modern, energy efficient designs. We have announced the first 50 schools to benefit, as part of a commitment to 500 rebuilding projects over the next

decade. We expect to confirm a further 50 projects this year and plan to consult on the approach to prioritising future projects later in 2021.

In addition, the existing Priority Schools Building Programme has been rebuilding or refurbishing buildings in poor condition at over 500 schools across England.

Mrs Sheryll Murray:

[\[901527\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support more young people into technical and further education.

Gavin Williamson:

The Skills for Jobs White Paper sets our plans to transform technical education and is focused on giving people the skills they need, in a way that suits them, so they can get great jobs in sectors the economy needs and boost productivity.

Our reforms will put employers at the heart of the skills system and by 2030, almost all technical courses will be on employer-led standards, ensuring that the education and training people receive are directly linked to the skills needed for jobs.

We have been raising the quality and prestige of technical education by introducing T Levels, which are a high-quality technical alternative to A levels with an industry placement, and are reforming higher technical education (Level 4/5) to make it a more popular and prestigious choice that provides the skills employers need.

The Plan for Jobs introduced last year provides a package of support to ensure young people have the skills and training to go on to high quality, secure and fulfilling employment. This includes incentives for employers to take on new apprentices, supporting the largest-ever expansion of Traineeships, giving school and college leavers the opportunity to study high value Level 2 and 3 courses, and funding more vocational training placements to support the delivery of sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) placements.

Damien Moore:

[\[901530\]](#)

What estimate his Department has made of the number of pupils who have moved to elective home education since schools reopened on 8 March 2021 as covid-19 lockdown measures were eased.

Nick Gibb:

We support the right of parents to educate their children at home, most will educate their children well, sometimes in challenging circumstances. However, we cannot overlook the rising numbers of home-educated children. For some, home education can mean children are not provided a suitable education or are invisible to the services and professionals there to keep them safe and supported.

The Department does not collect data on numbers of home educated children. Parents are not required to register if they are home educating their children and, therefore, there is not a robust basis on which the Department can reliably collect statistics on home education.

We remain committed to a registration system for children not in school, which would improve local authorities' ability to undertake their existing duties and help safeguard children who are in scope.

A consultation was held in the spring of 2019 on proposals for: a mandatory register of children not attending state or registered independent schools to help local authorities carry out their responsibilities in relation to children not in school; a duty on parents to register their child with the local authority if not registered at specified types of schools; a duty on proprietors of certain education settings to respond to enquiries from local authorities, and a duty on local authorities to provide support to parents who educate children at home.

The consultation closed on 24 June 2019, with nearly 5000 responses. Further details on a proposed registration system will be in the Government response to the consultation, which we intend to publish in the coming months.

■ Adoption Support Fund

Munira Wilson: [\[15403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the budget was for the Adoption Support Fund in each of the previous five financial years.

Munira Wilson: [\[15404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much has been spent from the Adoption Support Fund in each of the previous five financial years.

Munira Wilson: [\[15405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to change the eligibility criteria for the Adoption Support Fund.

Munira Wilson: [\[15406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will allocate funding to the Adoption Support Fund beyond 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The Adoption Support Fund budget and spend, as of 2 April 2021, is set out below. The spend includes funding for successful applications, contractual costs for the management and independent evaluation of the fund.

YEAR	BUDGET	SPEND
2016-17	£23,925,000	£23,900,624
2017-18	£29,000,000	£28,736,661
2018-19	£37,000,000	£36,697,988
2019-20	£42,000,000	£44,533,244

YEAR	BUDGET	SPEND
2020-21	£45,000,000	£51,164,542

There are currently no plans to change the fund's eligibility criteria. The next Spending Review for government departmental spend beyond the financial year of 2021-22 will consider the Adoption Support Fund and its budget, scope and eligibility criteria. We have put in place transitional arrangements in advance of the Spending Review outcome to allow funded support to continue beyond March 2022 for those families who commence therapy in the 2021-22 financial year.

■ **Breakfast Clubs: Contracts for Services**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[16861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the successful applicants for the School Breakfast Club Programme 2021-23 tender are planned to be announced.

Vicky Ford:

The Breakfast Clubs procurement has only recently been completed and is currently undergoing final checks. These details will be made available upon conclusion of the procurement process, through Contract Award Notices via the usual channels. We hope to inform the successful applicants as soon as proper procedure will allow.

■ **Department for Education: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[14193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Nick Gibb:

Guidance for public sector organisations on how to use automated or algorithmic decision-making systems in a safe, sustainable and ethical way is available on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethics-transparency-and-accountability-framework-for-automated-decision-making>.

The Government Automation Taskforce, with the Government Digital Service and the Office for Artificial Intelligence (AI), have developed a 7-point framework to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI and intelligent automation across the public sector: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethics-transparency-and-accountability-framework-for-automated-decision-making/ethics-transparency-and-accountability-framework-for-automated-decision-making>. It builds on existing Government and third-party guidance and legislation.

This framework is intended to significantly reduce the likelihood of an algorithmic or automated decision-making related incident. It should help to build trust, send clear

intent and progress the Government's effort to ensure the safe and ethical use of algorithms and automated systems.

The Department uses elements of automation, robotics and machine-learning, although much of the work remains experimental. The majority of automation that has been developed is for internal use. It is aimed at improving our operational processes across the Department and not to aid implementation of policies.

■ Education: Gender

Henry Smith: [\[10325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the learning gap between girls and boys.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises, and continues to monitor, the educational attainment gap between girls and boys. We have worked hard over the last decade to embed the reforms needed to raise standards for all children. Thanks to these efforts, the proportion of schools now rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding has risen from 68% in 2010 to 86% in 2020.

The Department does not design education policy that exclusively targets certain groups of pupils, including policy based on gender. We are committed to providing high quality education and training for everyone, regardless of their background.

When it comes to raising standards, evidence shows that teachers are the most important in-school factor affecting pupils' education. The Department has recently announced an investment of over £250 million in our National Professional Qualifications and Early Career Framework programmes which are based on the best available evidence and have been developed in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation. Through this, the Department is committed to helping tackle the educational attainment gap for all pupils.

■ Extracurricular Activities: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [\[12228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to issue covid-19 social distancing guidance for youth groups organising summer activities; what criteria the Government is using to determine that guidance; and which organisations the Government is consulting on that guidance.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[12229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the scientific basis is for not permitting large residential summer camps for children where covid-19 social distancing measures, including pre-quarantine, are in place.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[12230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the evidential basis is for the decision to allow non-residential summer camps where children return home between sessions to take place rather than covid-19 secure residential summer camps of more than 30 children.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[12231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to engage with the youth sector on the covid-19 rules for summer camps for children; and what steps can be taken to make summer camps covid-safe.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[12232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish guidance on summer activities at least a week in advance of 21 June 2021 regardless of whether or not the next stage of easing covid-19 restrictions in England takes place on that date.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises the significant benefits that summer camps and other forms of education outside the classroom can have on children's academic development as well as their mental health and wellbeing.

Since 17 May 2021, out-of-school settings, such as those offering residential summer camps, have been able to undertake overnight stays with children, in groups of six or two households (including at least one member of staff). From 21 June, out-of-school settings will be able to undertake residential visits and overnight stays can take place with groups of up to 30 children. The Department has provided updated guidance on protective measures for holiday or after school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the COVID-19 outbreak, which sets out how out-of-school settings can conduct residential visits safely.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has followed the advice of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and its sub-groups when taking decisions on the best way to handle the COVID-19 outbreak. As new evidence or data emerges, the Government will act accordingly to ensure that all out-of-school settings have the right safety measures in place, and that measures remain proportionate to the threat posed by COVID-19. The advice on residential visits will therefore be reviewed again in advance of Step 4 of the roadmap.

The Department is also working closely with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the National Youth Agency to ensure the Government has full awareness of the effect the COVID-19 outbreak has had on the youth sector. In response to youth sector engagement, dedicated youth sector COVID-19 guidance has been developed by the National Youth Agency in collaboration with DCMS, the Department, youth sector organisations and public health experts.

■ **Further Education Capital Transformation Fund**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[16860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the successful applicants of the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund bid are planned to be announced.

Gillian Keegan:

All further education (FE) colleges and designated institutions in England were invited to apply to stage 1 of the two stage FE Capital Transformation Fund in January, by setting out proposals for investment to tackle poor condition across their estates.

Stage 1 of the bidding process closed to colleges on 22 March and the department is assessing bid applications. We received a high number of applications, and the planned announcement of the stage 1 outcomes has been delayed.

We hope to inform colleges of the outcomes of stage 1, and publish the stage 2 guidance this summer. We will assess bids submitted at stage 2 before making final decisions on award of funding.

■ **National Association of Teachers of Religious Education: Textbooks**

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[16780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of whether the recent teaching materials issued to primary schools by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education is in breach of the prohibition on political propaganda in the classroom; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The law is clear that schools must remain politically impartial. Head teachers and staff have a responsibility to ensure that they act appropriately, particularly in the political views they express. When political issues are discussed, schools must offer pupils a balanced presentation of opposing views and should not present materials in a politically biased or one sided way.

Schools should not teach contested theory or opinions as fact and must ensure they uphold their duties with regard to political impartiality. Schools should be mindful of the need to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views as well as the age appropriateness of teaching, given that balanced treatment of such issues may not be possible with younger pupils.

Political impartiality in our education system is an important principle to uphold. The Department is developing further guidance to support schools to understand and meet their duties in this area.

■ Office for Students: Public Appointments

John McDonnell:

[\[14133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what salary is proposed for the new post of Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom; and what budget will be made available to that postholder.

Michelle Donelan:

The Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom will be responsible for overseeing the performance of the Office for Students' (OfS) freedom of speech functions, including the monitoring and enforcement of freedom of speech registration conditions and the new students' unions duties, as well as the new complaints scheme under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill.

The salary of the Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom has not yet been determined. They will be recruited through the public appointments process.

The department will work closely with the OfS to ensure it has the necessary resources to fulfil its duties.

■ Primary Education: North East

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[16013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of funding universal entitlement to the Summer Reading Challenge in the North East of England for primary school aged children as part of the Government's catch-up plans to support children's reading over the summer holidays.

Nick Gibb:

The Department welcomes the summer reading challenge and is supportive of the work of the Reading Agency.

The Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards, including those of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Ensuring that every child has access to high quality teaching of literacy forms a vital part of this Government's mission to 'level up' education across the country.

The Department has invested £3 billion since June 2020 to support education recovery. This will have a significant impact in addressing lost education and closing gaps that have emerged. The £1.4 billion package to support children aged 2-19 across schools, early years and further education colleges announced in June 2021 is the next step, and builds on the £1.7 billion already committed.

As part of the wider recovery package to support children and young people of all ages in catching up on missed education and development due to the COVID-19 outbreak, £200 million will be made available to secondary schools to deliver face to face summer schools this year.

The following North East library authorities participated in the Summer Reading Challenge in 2020: Durham, Hartlepool Borough Council, Northumberland County Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

All library authorities in the North East of England participated in 2019. All library authorities in the region, except Darlington, will be participating in 2021.

■ Remote Education: Literacy

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[12949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of home schooling and social distancing during the covid-19 outbreak on children's language skills.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education. On 4 June updated findings based on assessments taken in the autumn and spring terms were published. These show that primary pupils were, on average, behind expectations on their return to the classroom in the spring, by a similar amount as they were in September 2020. For reading, this is around 2 months behind.

The Government believes that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. Attaining proficient standards in language development and the reading and writing of standard English are key to unlocking the rest of the curriculum. They are also key indicators for future success in further education, higher education, and employment.

Research findings from the Social Distancing and Development Study show that babies and toddlers from disadvantaged backgrounds have been missing out on activities to support their development. Programmes to support language development include:

- £153 million for training for early years staff to support the youngest children's learning and development, which includes speech and language skills.
- An investment of £17 million to provide Nuffield Early Language Intervention, improving the language skills of Reception age children.
- £10 million for a pre-Reception early language continued professional development programme, supporting early years staff to work with disadvantaged children who are at risk of falling behind.
- £5.3 million grant funding to existing early years voluntary and community sector partners to support children's early literacy and language development, including support for children in early years with special educational needs and disabilities, and the wellbeing of disadvantaged children in the early years.

The Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs programme in 2018, dedicated to improving the teaching of reading. The 34 English Hubs in the

programme are primary schools which are excellent at teaching early reading. The Department has since provided a further £17 million for this school to school improvement programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. Since its launch, the English Hubs programme has provided appropriate and targeted support to several thousands of schools across England. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, English Hubs have continued to offer support and training to schools across the country by bringing much of their offer online. This has involved opening up virtual training and professional development events to a wider pool of schools and distributing materials targeted specifically at remote education and recovery.

■ School Leaving: Training

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[13856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that school leavers have adequate opportunities to undertake post-16 skills training.

Gillian Keegan:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET).

The September Guarantee places a further duty on local authorities to ensure that all year 11 pupils, and year 12 pupils on one-year courses, receive an offer of a place in education or training for the following September. It aims to ensure that all young people, regardless of what they achieved in school, understand that there are opportunities that will help them to progress, and to ensure that they receive the advice and support they need to find a suitable place.

The government plans to invest over £7 billion during the 2020/21 academic year, to ensure there is a place in education or training for every 16 to 19-year-old who wants one. This includes spend on apprenticeships.

The apprenticeship support and knowledge for schools and further education colleges programme (ASK) provides targeted local and regional support on NEET prevention to raise aspirations of cohorts of young people in areas of disadvantage and support their post-education progression. The ASK provides information on a variety of post-16 options including apprenticeships, traineeships and T Levels.

Traineeships prepare for young people for apprenticeships and work through a combination of sector-focused skills development and work experience. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, confirmed an additional £126 million for the 2021/22 academic year to fund a further 40,000 traineeship places.

■ Schools: Fire Extinguishers

Peter Kyle:

[14105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the requiring the installation of sprinkler systems in schools in England.

Nick Gibb:

The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety of pupils and staff, and to ensuring that the owners of school buildings take the necessary action to protect those buildings.

The Department's policy, set out in Building Bulletin 100, is that sprinklers must be fitted where they are deemed necessary to keep pupils and staff safe. This is in accordance with the Building Regulations and all new school building projects must comply with building regulations on fire safety.

The Department is currently updating its guidance, Building Bulletin 100, on fire safety design for schools. To support this review, a call for evidence was issued asking for stakeholder views and supporting evidence on the benefits of multiple fire safety features, including sprinkler systems. A comprehensive review of the responses has been undertaken along with any information submitted subsequently. This included the merits of various fire safety systems, such as upgraded fire alarms, installation of evacuation lifts and sprinkler systems.

The Department's consultation on the revised version of Building Bulletin 100 is currently live. Once the consultation has concluded, Ministers will review all responses to the consultation, particularly any new evidence, before agreeing a final version .

■ **Schools: Sports**

Peter Kyle: **[16907]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will provide a breakdown of planned funding for school sports in 2021-22 by local authority.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has confirmed the overall funding for the Primary 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. Funding will be allocated according to a formula and details will be confirmed in the autumn as in previous years.

The Department publishes PE and sport premium allocations by local authority. Information on allocations for the current academic year is available here:

<https://skillsfunding.service.gov.uk/view-latest-funding/national-funding-allocations/PSG/2020-to-2021>.

■ **Schools: Standards**

Peter Kyle: **[16904]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report, Fight or flight? How stuck schools are overcoming isolation: evaluation report, published by Ofsted in January 2020, what is his latest estimate of the number of schools defined as stuck which

have been rated by Ofsted as less than good for 13 years or more; and how many pupils are enrolled in those schools.

Nick Gibb:

As of 31 March 2021, there were 412 schools that have been rated by Ofsted as less than good for 13 years or more. Around 210,000 pupils were enrolled in the schools, rounded to the nearest 10,000.

■ **Students: Loans**

Fabian Hamilton:

[16788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure Muslim students are able to access student loans without contradicting their religious beliefs on interest.

Michelle Donelan:

I refer the hon. Member for Leeds North East to the answer I gave on 9 June 2021 to Question [10312](#).

■ **Students: Mental Health Services**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[13854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) schools, (b) colleges and (c) universities have sufficient resources to provide effective mental healthcare to students.

Vicky Ford:

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is a priority for this government. While education settings cannot provide specialist clinical care, the support schools and colleges are providing to their pupils following the return to face-to-face education should include time devoted to supporting mental health and wellbeing, which will play a fundamental part in supporting recovery. We want schools to have the freedom to decide what wider pastoral and extra-curricular activity to put in place, based on the needs of their pupils and drawing on evidence of effective practice.

We are supporting recovery action with significant additional funding. In June 2021, we announced £1.4 billion of additional funding for education recovery. This is in addition to the £1.7 billion already committed, bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3 billion. The package provides support to children aged 2 to 19 in schools, 16-19 providers and early years. It will expand our reforms in two areas where the evidence is clear our investment will have significant impact: high quality tutoring targeted at those that need it most and high quality training for teachers. The one-off Recovery Premium for state-funded schools will help schools to provide their disadvantaged pupils with a boost to the support, both academic and pastoral, that has been proved most effective in helping them recover from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. This is in addition to the £650 million catch-up premium shared across state-funded schools over the 2020/21

academic year, which is also supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. The Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 support guide to support schools, which includes further information about interventions to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

Our Mental Health in Education Action Group has been looking further at what more can to be done to help education settings support mental wellbeing as part of recovery. The department has recently brought together all its sources of advice or schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders, as well as guidance to support relationships, sex and health education curriculum planning, covering of the key issues children and young people have been concerned about throughout the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

On 10 May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £9.5 million for up to 7,800 schools to train a senior mental health lead in the next academic year, and £7 million in additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on Wellbeing for Education Return in the 2020/21 academic year, which offered schools in every local authority and reached up to 15,000 schools with free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year, including trauma, anxiety, or grief.

For further education, the College Collaboration Fund (CCF), a £5.4 million national programme of competitive grant funding delivered in the 2020/21 financial year, is helping to support learner and staff mental health and wellbeing through online programmes and remote support. One of the funded projects was Weston College's 'Let's Chat' programme, which delivered a number of wellbeing support packages accessible at any time to keep staff, students and their families safe and well during lockdown. We are now assessing bids for the CCF 2 for the 2021/22 financial year.

With regards to higher education (HE), student mental health and suicide prevention are key priorities for this government. We continue to work closely with the HE sector to promote good practice. We recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has engaged with universities on this issue, and has written to Vice Chancellors on numerous occasions during the past year outlining that student welfare should remain a priority. She has also convened a working group of representatives from the HE and health sectors to specifically address the current and pressing issues that students are facing during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Universities are not only experts in their student population, but also best placed to identify the needs of their student body. The Department for Health and Social Care

has overall policy responsibility for young people's mental health. We continue to work closely with them to take steps to develop mental health and wellbeing support.

We have also increased funding to specialist services. In March, we announced a £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support, which will include increasing the number of Mental Health Support Teams. The support teams - which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges - will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. This increase means that millions of children and young people will have access to significantly expanded mental health services. In total, £13 million will be used to accelerate progress to support young adults aged 18 to 25. This group includes university students and those not in education or training, who have reported the worst mental health outcomes during the COVID-19 outbreak, and who sometimes fall through the gap between children and adult services.

While it is for HE providers to determine what welfare and counselling services they need to provide to their students to offer that support, the government is proactive in promoting good practice in this area. We continue to work closely with Universities UK on embedding the Stepchange programme within the sector. Stepchange calls on HE leaders to adopt mental health as a strategic priority and to take a whole-institution approach, embedding it across all policies, cultures, curricula, and practice. The Stepchange programme relaunched in March 2020 as the Mentally Healthy Universities programme. Further information on the programme is available here: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/stepchange>.

The University Mental Health Charter, announced in June 2018, is backed by the government and led by the HE sector. The charter, developed in collaboration with students, staff and partner organisations, aims to drive up standards of practice, including leadership, early intervention, and data collection. Further information on the charter is available here: <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.html>.

The department has also worked with the Office for Students (OfS) to provide Student Space, a dedicated mental health and wellbeing platform for students. Student Space has been funded by up to £3 million from the OfS in the 2020/21 academic year. We have asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22 through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities grant funding, to help address the challenges to student mental health posed by the transition to university, given the increasing demand for mental health services. This will target students in greatest need of such services, including vulnerable and hard to reach groups.

■ Teachers: Physical Education

Peter Kyle:

[16906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many PE teachers were employed by schools in each of the last 10 calendar years, by local authority.

Nick Gibb:

The headcount of physical education (PE) teachers in service in state-funded secondary schools in November 2011 to November 2020 is provided in the attached table. It is also published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

While there is no formal register for PE teachers, for context, information is also shown on the percentage of hours spent teaching PE in each year and the percentage of hours of PE which are taught by a teacher with a relevant post A level qualification. A relevant post A level qualification is a level 4 qualification or above in physical education, sports science, sports physiology, sports psychology or dance (including ballet).

Information for teachers in primary schools and broken down by local authority is not available due to the manner in which data is collected from a sample of secondary schools.

Attachments:

1. [16906 table](#) [16906_table_on_teaching_physical_education.xls]

■ Training: West Yorkshire**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[13858]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many post-16 skills training places have been supported by his Department in (a) Huddersfield and (b) West Yorkshire since 2019.

Gillian Keegan:

The attached file contains the number of learners participating on adult (19+) further education and skills, and all age apprenticeships, in the West Yorkshire combined authority and the Huddersfield parliamentary constituency from the 2018/19 academic year onwards. These figures are as published in our further education and skills statistics publication: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-and-skills>.

Data are not available for 16-18 non-apprenticeship learners in the West Yorkshire combined authority and the Huddersfield parliamentary constituency. We publish an overall estimate for the number of 16-18 year olds participating in Education and training in England, which can be found in the attached file. The latest data published is for the academic year 2019/20 with the 2020/21 data scheduled for publication on 24 June 2021.

Attachments:

1. [13858 table](#) [13858_table_showing_FE_participation_in_Huddersfield_and_West_Yorkshire.xls]

■ Training: Young People

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[13857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of his Department's budget has been spent on providing post-16 skills training in each of the last three years.

Gillian Keegan:

14% of the department's total resource budget has been spent on post-16 education and skills training in each of the financial years 2020-21, 2019-20 and 2018-19. This includes spending on core 16-19 funding, the Adult Education Budget, apprenticeships and other measures to support post-16 education and skills. It excludes spending on higher education and funding for post-16 pupils in schools.

In relation to capital funding, the department is increasing its investment in post-16 education and skills over the next few years. In 2020-21, the department provided £200 million to all further education (FE) colleges to allow them to tackle their remedial condition improvement projects. The FE Capital Transformation Programme will follow up this initial investment over the coming 5 years, investing an additional £1.3 billion in upgrading the FE college estate.

■ Vocational Education: Qualifications

Helen Hayes:

[\[16169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to ensure the continued availability of (a) BTECs and (b) other applied general qualifications .

Gillian Keegan:

The department has consulted in two stages on proposals for the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3, which includes Applied General qualifications and level 3 Pearson BTEC qualifications.

The second stage of consultation ran from 23 October 2020 to 31 January 2021 and set out proposals for the qualifications that should be approved for funding alongside A levels and T Levels, and how we will make sure every qualification is high quality and allows progression to good outcomes.

We are considering the feedback to the consultation carefully and will publish a full response later this year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Carbon Emissions: Environment Protection

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[16267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including data about blue carbon ecosystems in the (a) greenhouse gas inventory and (b) Nationally Determined Contribution calculations.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK greenhouse gas (GHG) Inventory will be used to report progress against the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). UK NDC performance will be assessed in 2032 based on the UK 1990-2030 GHG Inventory submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The UK does not currently have the required data to report on anthropogenic activities impacting saltmarsh and seagrass (blue carbon habitats), as set out in the 2013 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Wetlands Supplement, and they are therefore not currently included in the UK GHG Inventory. We continue to build the evidence base on blue carbon habitats to help inform future, robust GHG reporting and accounting.

The Government recognises the role that blue carbon habitats, such as saltmarsh and seagrass, can play to prevent biodiversity loss and support adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside carbon sequestration benefits. The importance of marine habitats was acknowledged in the UK NDC's information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding, as well as in the UK's Adaptation Communication.

Virginia Crosbie:[\[16268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to take steps to include actions that benefit the restoration and protection of blue carbon habitats in his Departments (a) Environmental Land Management Scheme and (b) other schemes.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK recognises the important role that blue carbon habitats – such as saltmarsh and seagrass - can play to prevent biodiversity loss and support adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside carbon sequestration benefits. The protection and restoration of these habitats therefore provides a nature-based solution.

The UK is a global leader in ocean protection with 38% of UK waters in Marine Protected Areas, covering the majority of saltmarsh and seagrass habitats. Our focus is now on ensuring these are effectively protected.

The Government recently published its response to the Benyon Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs), accepting the central recommendation that we should identify a number of locations to pilot this approach. HPMAs will be identified on the basis of their ecological value, including areas with potential to recover, and blue carbon habitats. Social and economic principles will then be used to help us understand and minimise the impacts on sea users.

In addition, a number of coastal and estuarine habitat restoration initiatives are underway. The Environment Agency's Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef (ReMeMaRe) initiative is working to restore our estuarine and coastal habitats, including blue carbon habitats, to benefit people and nature. Natural England is also leading the EU-funded LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES (Reducing and Mitigating Erosion

and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed) project, which aims to restore seagrass and maerl habitat in five Special Areas of Conservation.

We are also introducing three schemes that reward the delivery of environmental benefits, including for coastal habitat: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Local Nature Recovery scheme and the Landscape Recovery scheme. We are working with stakeholders and end users to determine the specific land management actions that will be paid for under our new schemes. The Agricultural Transition Plan set out examples of the types of actions that we envisage paying for under the schemes, including creating, managing, and restoring coastal habitats such as wetlands and salt marsh.

■ Climate Change and Ecology

Luke Pollard:

[14214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on what date the Government declared a climate and ecological emergency.

Rebecca Pow:

The House of Commons voted for a motion on 1 May 2019 to declare an environment and climate emergency.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Artificial Intelligence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[14043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 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.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra recognises the potential for artificial intelligence (AI) to play an important part in ensuring that data and science are at the heart of decision making.

Defra recognises the potential for artificial intelligence (AI) to play an important part in ensuring that data and science are at the heart of decision making.

All of Defra's ongoing and previous research projects, including a number involving AI and machine learning (ML), are published on Defra's research and development website: randd.defra.gov.uk. Planned projects are advertised on Bravo: defra.bravosolution.co.uk. The specific information requested is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

Areas particularly benefitting from these tools include the interpretation of Earth Observation and automated sensor data, the development of advanced modelling techniques, and improved customer service. We are further developing our data science capabilities (data linkage, advanced tooling and platforms) to ensure our scientists and analysts are able to effectively exploit data using advanced analytic

techniques which include AI components, such as ML and other novel innovative approaches that will inform decision making.

We will continue to work in partnership across Government, with academia and industry to develop the use of AI and ML for Defra.

The opportunities and considerations associated with the use of AI continue to be explored, as outlined in the guidance on building and using artificial intelligence in the public sector, published on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/a-guide-to-using-artificial-intelligence-in-the-public-sector>

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: **[14194]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra maintains a high-level, persistent watch on emerging technologies via our Digital, Data and Technology Services innovations team's emerging technologies radar and the Chief Scientific Adviser's Office Futures team. As such, Defra both recognises the potential for artificial intelligence to play an important part in ensuring that data and science are at the heart of decision making, and is also aware of the general threats and opportunities afforded by AI.

The opportunities and considerations associated with the use of AI continue to be explored, as outlined in the guidance on building and using artificial intelligence in the public sector, published on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/a-guide-to-using-artificial-intelligence-in-the-public-sector>

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies

Daniel Zeichner: **[15268]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Transport to tackle the shortage of HGV drivers as a result of the UK's departure from the EU.

Daniel Zeichner: **[15269]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help prevent (a) food shortages and (b) gaps in supply on supermarket shelves as a result of the shortage of HGV drivers arising since the UK's departure from the EU.

Daniel Zeichner: **[15270]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the potential volume of food that may go to waste as a result of the shortage of HGV drivers since the UK's departure from the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

My Rt Hon Friend the Environment Secretary has discussed with the Secretary of State for Transport the logistical challenges for the food industry caused by a shortfall of HGV drivers.

Officials in both departments are also working together on requests from some sector industries to extend the driver delivery hours under Article 14(2) of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 to accommodate deliveries.

In addition, officials from Defra and DfT continue to meet regularly to discuss the wider issue of driver shortfalls and the potential impact on the UK food supply chain, including food shortages and food waste. Defra is gathering regular intelligence from the food industry through engagement, including supermarkets to inform solutions. Based on Defra's evidence assessment, major supermarkets are experiencing shortages of fresh produce and increased food waste due to driver shortages. However, the level of adverse impact on their logistics operations has been minimal with no major food product shelf shortages reported.

Driver shortages is a long term issue requiring long term solutions. Options being considered in that space include the Department for Education's Large Goods Vehicles apprenticeship scheme; the Department for Work and Pensions' action to encourage more job seekers into the profession; and increased Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency testing capacity.

Overall, the impact of the EU-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has had minimal impact on the UK food supply which is highly resilient. The food industry is well versed in dealing with scenarios that can impact food supply. Consumers in the UK have access to a range of sources of food, including countless domestic food producers and imports from a range of stable sources.

■ Plants: EU Countries**Paul Maynard:****[13009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to develop a trusted trader inspection regime for the ornamental horticulture sector for plants imported from the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

GB's plant health regime is risk-based, and the history of compliance of specific trades (where the trade is the combination of a specific commodity from a specific origin), is a significant factor in determining biosecurity risk. Consequently, trades with a proven track record of compliance and meeting prescribed eligibility criteria may be subject to a reduced frequency or intensity of checks.

Whilst the biosecurity risk of imported goods is largely *trade* based, there are areas where *trader* considerations may also play a role. For example, as the phased introduction of EU-GB plant health import controls is completed in early 2022, Defra are exploring possible options for performing plant health controls away from the border on a longer-term basis, such as increased uptake in the use of designated

plant health Control Points. Eligibility criteria to be designated as a Control Point may include elements consistent with a trusted trader model.

■ Seas and Oceans: Marine Environment

Claire Hanna: [\[16251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the Operation Ocean Witness initiative launched on 8 June 2021 by Greenpeace.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine Protected Areas are a devolved competency and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

We remain committed to delivering a well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Our focus is therefore on making sure all MPAs are being effectively managed as quickly as possible. 98 MPAs in inshore waters now have management measures in place to protect sensitive features from bottom towed fishing gears.

A new byelaw power in the Fisheries Act 2020 allows the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to protect offshore MPAs from damaging fishing activity. Work on implementing this has begun and the MMO has already consulted on byelaws for 4 priority offshore MPAs. We aim to have these in place later this year. In consultation with the fishing industry, the MMO is also developing a 3-year programme for assessing all offshore sites to see what measures are required, including implementing byelaws, where necessary, to manage fishing activity in these MPAs.

The MMO monitors activity to ensure all fishing complies with current rules and will ensure compliance with new measures as they are introduced.

■ Transport: Refrigeration

Geraint Davies: [\[15996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of levels of pollution (a) caused by diesel non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) engines fitted to transport refrigeration equipment and (b) in areas with temperature controlled warehouses where NRMM are used and make frequent deliveries.

Rebecca Pow:

Tailpipe emissions from vehicles which power transport refrigeration units are recorded as road traffic emissions in the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. The data for road transport emission is published annually and has been reported since 1990 onwards. The Government has not historically estimated emissions from transport refrigeration unit auxiliary engines as the available data is limited.

Defra has recently completed a research project which involved working with industry and sector experts and aimed to improve the evidence base on emissions from non-road mobile machinery, including transport refrigeration units, and we are considering

next steps. As set out in the Clean Air Strategy, the Government is considering the options to reduce emissions from non-road mobile machinery, and this research will help ensure that we have a robust and accurate evidence base to consider policy options from.

■ **Wildlife: Smuggling**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[13874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions officials in his Department have had with officials in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the provision of support to countries for tackling the source of the illegal wildlife trade.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is the lead department for tackling the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and works collaboratively with other Government departments, including the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Home Office and Ministry of Defence to deliver the UK's ambition to combat the IWT. This has included joint Ministerial working to convene the largest ever global IWT Conference in London 2018.

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund has committed over £26m to 85 projects tackling the IWT around the world since it was launched at the London IWT Conference in 2014. In addition, Defra works across Government to ensure that our international programming to counter the IWT, using Official Development Assistance, aligns with and supports wider UK and foreign policy ambition, delivering impactful and effective counter-IWT projects on the ground.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Bahrain: Democracy**

John Nicolson:

[\[13107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what meetings he or his ministers have had with pro-democracy activists in Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

During my visit to Bahrain, I met with a number of Bahrainis, both governmental and non-governmental, with a range of opinions. The FCDO considers a range of information in making our assessment of the Human Rights picture in Bahrain, including meeting individuals or groups when we deem appropriate.

■ **China: Uighurs**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[15310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he (a) has had and (b) plans to have with relevant stakeholders to establish a new process at the UN Human Rights Council to enable an independent international

mechanism to investigate crimes under international law and other human rights violations against the Uyghur people in Xinjiang Province in China.

Nigel Adams:

The UK government has consistently led international efforts to hold China to account for its human rights violations in Xinjiang. We led the first two statements on Xinjiang at the UN and have utilised our diplomatic network to raise the issue up the international agenda. We have been successful in building the international caucus of countries calling out China, with 39 countries supporting a statement at the UN third committee last October.

The Foreign Secretary has also repeatedly urged China to grant urgent and unfettered access to Xinjiang for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights or another independent fact-finding expert. He most recently raised this matter directly with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, on 27 May, and in an address to the Human Rights Council on 22 February. We will continue to work closely with our partners and take every opportunity to hold China to account for its violations in Xinjiang in the UN's human rights bodies.

■ **Colombia: Demonstrations**

Feryal Clark:

[\[16245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of armed civilians opening fire on demonstrators in the presence of police officers during recent protests in Colombia.

Wendy Morton:

The British Government is concerned about reports of armed civilians opening fire on demonstrators in the presence of police officers. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully, and that the right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed. Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we have raised our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia since protests began. Most recently, I spoke with acting Foreign Minister Adriana Mejía on 14 May to express our concerns, and welcome Colombia's commitment to transparent investigations into all allegations. I made it clear that the security services must be held accountable for their actions, with all complaints thoroughly investigated.

We will continue to work closely with the UN Verification Mission, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, as well as the wider international community, in support of their efforts to reduce tensions, promote dialogue, and ensure accountability.

■ Commonwealth: Coronavirus

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[\[15998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to prioritise Commonwealth countries when donating covid-19 vaccines overseas.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has consistently stressed that we are all facing the same pandemic, and the threat of further waves and variants of the coronavirus makes cooperation with all our partners ever more vital and important.

Our G7 Presidency has championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics, and on 11 June, the Prime Minister announced that the UK will donate 100 million C-19 vaccine doses within the next year, 80% of which will go to COVAX, the scheme to ensure vaccines are available affordably for everyone, including Commonwealth countries. The UK was one of the earliest and largest donors to COVAX, donating £548 million to the Advance Market Commitment. So far, COVAX has helped deliver over 81 million doses to 129 countries and territories. We will set out more detail on the prioritisation of our dose sharing in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[\[15999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to give recipient countries as much notice as possible on the (a) number and (b) arrival dates of covid-19 vaccines that are planned to be sent by the UK Government.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister has announced that the UK will share 100 million C-19 vaccine doses within the next year, of which 30 million will be delivered by the end of 2021. 5 million doses will be shared by the end of September, starting in the coming weeks, and 80% of these vaccines will go to COVAX. This was part of an agreement with G7 partners to donate 1 billion doses by June 2022.

Decisions on which vaccines will be shared will be based on the continued reliability of supply chains, regulatory restrictions, and advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. We will set out more detail in due course, including the number and type of vaccines, as well as estimated dates of arrival.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[16915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the cost to the public purse will be of the planned donation of 100 million covid-19 vaccine doses in the next 12 months (a) to COVAX and (b) bilaterally.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister has committed that 80 per cent of our surplus vaccines will go to COVAX, the scheme part-funded by the UK government, to make sure vaccines are

available affordably for everyone. The remainder will be shared bilaterally with countries in need. Five million doses will be shared by the end of September, starting in the coming weeks and 30 million will be delivered by the end of 2021. The cost will depend on which vaccines are available for donation and decisions on which vaccines will be shared will be based on the continued reliability of supply chains, regulatory restrictions and advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. We will set out more details in due course.

■ Developing Countries

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[16182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he intends to publish his new strategy for international development.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary is leading work on the new International Development Strategy, which will be cross-government in scope. We intend to publish the strategy later this year.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[\[16109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will hold discussions with the (a) Prime Minister and (b) World Health Organisation to improve assistance to developing nations through provision of the covid-19 vaccine.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is playing a leading role in international efforts to deliver 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 \$1 billion from other donors in 2020 through match-funding. This support to COVAX has been critical to it distributing COVID-19 vaccines to over 130 countries and economies, with its aim to provide up to 1.8 billion doses to low and middle-income countries by early 2022. The UK has also committed to sharing 100 million vaccine doses over the next year, with the majority going to COVAX.

The Prime Minister and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) Ministers regularly discuss efforts to further boost global COVID-19 vaccination efforts with international partners. This includes the World Health Organisation (WHO), with Dr Tedros among those who addressed Leaders at the G7 Summit in June. The FCDO is supporting the WHO with £340 million in fully flexible core funding between 2020-2024 for its work on pandemics and emergencies, health systems, and institutional reform.

■ Developing Countries: Females

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[16882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what fiscal steps he is taking to improve women and girls lives and health in the Global South.

Wendy Morton:

Advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights are a core part of this Government's mission, including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education, empowering women socially, economically, and politically, and ending violence against women and girls. This is also highlighted in the Integrated Review (IR) which was published earlier this year, the joint US-UK Statement following President Biden's visit to the UK and the G7 Leaders Communiqué.

We know that women and girls are amongst the hardest hit by the indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why we donated an additional £10 million for the United Nations Population Fund's Covid-19 response and an additional £1 million (on top of our existing £21 million contribution), to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women for the COVID-19 Crisis Response Window. These funds have supported small grassroots organisations on the frontlines and placed survivors at the heart of our response. The UK is also continuing its work to advance sexual reproductive health and rights, including access to modern family planning methods in the world's poorest countries. Between April 2015 and March 2020, with UK Aid funding we reached an average of 25.3 million women and girls with modern methods of family planning per year.

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[16883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress has been made on improving the lives and health of women and girls in the Global South.

Wendy Morton:

Advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights are a core part of this Government's mission, including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education, empowering women socially, economically, and politically, and ending violence against women and girls. This is also highlighted in the Integrated Review (IR) which was published earlier this year, the joint US-UK Statement following President Biden's visit to the UK and the G7 Leaders Communiqué. We know that women and girls are amongst the hardest hit by the indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why we donated an additional £10 million for the United Nations Population Fund's Covid-19 response and an additional £1 million to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women for the COVID-19 Crisis Response Window. The UK takes action to advance SRHR, including access to modern family planning methods in the world's poorest countries. Between April 2015 and March 2020, the UK reached an average of 25.3 million total women and girls with modern methods of family planning per year.

■ EU Countries: LGBT People

Catherine West: [\[16181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on threats to LGBT+ rights throughout the continent.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is proud to defend LGBT+ rights worldwide through our global network. We work through existing international mechanisms and institutions to promote tolerance and non-discrimination against LGBT+ people and to address discriminatory laws. We regularly raise LGBT+ human rights issues with our EU counterparts, and as the current host of the Council of Europe's LGBTI Focal Points Network (EFPN). In May, the UK - in partnership with Cyprus - hosted a virtual conference to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) 2021 where we discussed domestic initiatives to advance LGBT+ rights and equality in Europe.

■ Family Planning

Tommy Sheppard: [\[16881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what fiscal steps he is taking to increase access to family planning.

Wendy Morton:

The UK continues to play a significant role in increasing access to voluntary family planning globally, as part of our efforts to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. UK aid is supporting UNFPA, the Global Financing Facility, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, MSI Reproductive Choices and other partners, to advance the availability of modern contraception in the world's poorest countries. In 2021/22 UK aid is also supporting the launch of the new global family planning partnership, FP2030, to accelerate country leadership on family planning.

■ Gender Equality Advisory Council

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[16916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has plans to adopt the recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council 2021 to the leaders of the G7.

Wendy Morton:

Gender equality is a core focus of the UK's G7 Presidency. I am delighted that the Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), Sarah Sands, and Council member Dr Denis Mukwege, were able to deliver impactful interventions to G7 Leaders during the Summit on 11 June. The G7 Summit communiqué speaks to major areas of GEAC recommendations and the recommendations align significantly with work that the UK and the FCDO specifically is driving forward with our G7 partners including on girls' education, climate financing, and on global action to end

violence against women and girls. I look forward to the continuation of the GEAC's important work.

■ **Liechtenstein and Switzerland: Trade Agreements**

Andrew Rosindell:

[16039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with their Swiss counterparts on whether they made an assessment of the potential effect of ending negotiations for a bilateral agreement on Liechtenstein.

Andrew Rosindell:

[16040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with their counterparts in Liechtenstein on the potential effect on that nation of Switzerland ending negotiations for a bilateral agreement with the EU.

Andrew Rosindell:

[16041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with their Swiss counterparts on their decision to end negotiations on a bilateral agreement with the EU.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) engages with Swiss and Liechtenstein counterparts on a regular basis on the full range of bilateral interests, including our respective EU relations. We have spoken with officials from both countries following Switzerland's decision to end negotiations with the EU towards a proposed Institutional Framework Agreement.

Switzerland has emphasised the shared Swiss-EU interest in safeguarding existing bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU, and has proposed a political dialogue with the EU to develop new strands of future cooperation. We note that Liechtenstein has a different relationship with the EU to that of Switzerland, due to Liechtenstein's membership of the European Economic Area (EEA). We will continue to monitor any impact on Liechtenstein as a result of the Swiss decision to end negotiations.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Crispin Blunt:

[16781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to reply to the letter from 50 hon. Members of 11 May 2021 on the Government's policy on Turkey.

Wendy Morton:

A response to this letter was sent on Thursday 17 June.

■ **Myanmar: Armed Conflict**

Carol Monaghan: [\[16876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he taking to help ensure that children in Myanmar are protected against (a) exploitation, (b) sexual violence and (c) physical violence during the current crisis.

Carol Monaghan: [\[16880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking in Myanmar to (a) support child protection and (b) facilitate access to psychosocial support for children.

Nigel Adams:

We are extremely concerned about the worsening situation in Myanmar, and the acute impacts on the physical and mental wellbeing of children in Myanmar. Children are being killed, wounded, detained and exposed to tear gas and stun grenades and are witnessing scenes of violence. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR's) latest figures, 200,000 have been displaced, cutting children off from essential services. Humanitarian access for providing urgent assistance to those affected by violence and conflict in Myanmar is increasingly constrained. Access to education and access to healthcare have been severely disrupted since the coup. The UK has on average provided around 14% of all humanitarian assistance through the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), placing the UK among the top three humanitarian donors in Myanmar. We are developing our response and have provided £5 million for emergency displacement and needs since the coup.

The UK is committed to children in Myanmar and to providing the services critical for children's survival and wellbeing. A large part of the humanitarian caseload are children and, through national and international organisations, civil society and the UN, we are providing assistance in health, nutrition, protection and education. The UK supports global human rights actors and monitoring mechanisms, such as the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), to monitor and collate evidence of all forms of violence and abuse in relation to the coup, including gender based violence and violence against children. I met with the IIMM on 17 June to discuss its critical role in preserving evidence, and the UK's continued support for the mechanism.

Carol Monaghan: [\[16878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support (a) national governments and (b) international NGOs to ensure that they have the capacity and resources to safeguard the lives of children fleeing the Myanmar conflict.

Nigel Adams:

We continue to ensure that UK aid in Myanmar prioritises the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people fleeing conflict, including mothers and children. The UK

is one of the biggest humanitarian donors. Since the coup, we have provided over £5 million in new humanitarian funding for The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN, and local and International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). We have also reprioritised over £2.5 million of humanitarian funding to International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) to ensure they can channel support through local partners to reach displaced families.

Outside Myanmar, the UK has been a leading donor to the Rohingya response in Bangladesh, providing over £320 million since 2017. We are also supporting refugees displaced to Thailand via The Border Consortium, with a commitment of £3.8 million to the consortium since December 2020.

■ Myanmar: Coronavirus

Carol Monaghan:

[\[16879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking (a) in response to the disruption to the covid-19 strategy in Myanmar and (b) to prevent the further spread of covid-19 in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has provided £35.5 million for the COVID response in Myanmar to date, which is being delivered via NGOs and UN organisations. We have also re-orientated our wider aid portfolio to mitigate the effects of COVID, prioritising support for health and humanitarian support. UK aid is supporting COVID prevention and providing essential access to clean water, food, sanitation and medical services. We are working with civil society organisations in conflict-affected areas not controlled by the government to improve risk communication within communities and expand testing. We are concerned about reports of rising numbers of COVID cases in Myanmar. We will continue to monitor the situation and work with our partners to respond.

■ Myanmar: Education

Carol Monaghan:

[\[16877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking in Myanmar to (a) facilitate access to education and (b) tackle barriers to educational access, including (i) early marriage, (ii) exploitation and (iii) sexual and physical violence.

Nigel Adams:

Long term conflict, displacement and economic hardship are major barriers to education in Myanmar. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of most schools in March 2020, with limited home-based learning opportunities. The February 2021 military coup caused violence and poverty, and although the regime ordered schools to reopen in June 2021, across most of the country students and teachers have not returned, for fear of violence, COVID-19, or legitimating the regime. Data from 2017 suggests around 16% of girls in Myanmar are married before they are 18. This is linked to school drop-out and often means the end to a girl's formal education.

The UK remains committed to ensure disadvantaged children can still access learning. For example, through the Myanmar Education Consortium, the UK is supporting 167,000 children in ethnic basic education provider (EBEP) run school systems to overcome barriers to access and quality or to study at home. Around half of these children are girls. The UK promotes gender equality across its work in Myanmar, this includes our support to women's rights organisations who challenge norms around violence and discrimination against children and women. We are also working with international partners to ensure continuity of education across the country, as far as possible.

■ **Nicaragua: Political Prisoners**

Catherine West: [\[16179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment has been made of the detention of opposition activists in Nicaragua.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is most concerned at the unacceptable steps being taken by the Nicaraguan authorities to prevent opposition candidates and activists from taking part in November's presidential elections. The arrests and harassment of opposition figures represent further anti-democratic developments in Nicaragua at the behest of President Daniel Ortega. They violate the guarantees in Nicaragua's constitution, and further deprive the people of Nicaragua of the right to choose their own political leaders and parliamentary representatives freely.

Since the Nicaraguan authorities' lethal clampdown of protests in 2018, the UK has regularly voiced its concern over the country's deteriorating human rights and democratic situation. On 4 June, the UK issued a statement condemning the arrest and disqualification of potential presidential candidate, Cristiana Chamorro, alongside other international partners. On 15 June, as a Permanent Observer to the Organisation of American States, the UK voiced its support for the OAS' resolution condemning the arrests, and called for free and fair elections. We will continue to call on the authorities in Nicaragua to support the necessary steps for upholding the rights of all Nicaraguan voters in exercising their right to vote freely, safely, and without interference; to ensure that all political parties, their chosen candidates, and supporters can campaign freely and safely in advance of this year's elections; and to ensure that journalists and the media are allowed to operate impartially, and without restriction.

■ **Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[16918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any payments promised under UK Aid Match commitments have been postponed as a result of the reduction in the aid budget from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent.

Nigel Adams:

We have protected all active UK Aid Match projects and we are fully committed to match fund all appeals which were approved under UK Aid Match round 4. Due to the reduction in ODA, we've had to make the difficult decision to defer the start dates for round 4 projects to 1 April 2022. Officials have been in touch with all 16 organisations affected to sign grant agreements in advance to provide additional assurance to their partners and supporters that the FCDO is still matching their fundraising appeal pound for pound.

Overseas Aid: Health Professions**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[16919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the letter to the Prime Minister from the Royal College of Midwives on the reduction in the aid budget, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget on the number of midwives, nurses and doctors in training.

Wendy Morton:

The UK government remains committed to supporting nursing, midwifery and doctor training in low and low-middle income countries through our work to strengthen health systems. This includes our investments in global health initiatives such as the Global Financing Facility and the Global Fund to Fight AIDs, TB and Malaria. It also includes support to large advocacy focused initiatives such as the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Supported by the UK, the WHO, has developed tools to enhance midwifery training. The Strengthening Midwifery in Bangladesh programme also continues to support the training and licensing of midwives.

The impact of the global pandemic on the economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including within our global health portfolio. The aid budget has been allocated in accordance with UK strategic priorities against a challenging financial climate of COVID.

Pakistan: Counter-terrorism**Dan Jarvis:**[\[16113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is providing assistance to Pakistan using the Counter Terrorism Programme Fund to improve the capability of the police and criminal justice sector.

Dan Jarvis:[\[16114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance his Department is providing to Pakistan using the Counter Terrorism Programme Fund; and if he will publish details of that assistance.

Nigel Adams:

The Counter-terrorism Associated Prosecutorial Reforms Initiative (CAPRI) programme ran in Pakistan from 2013 to 2020, working to improve the capability of

the police and criminal justice sector in Punjab. We remain committed to working together with the Government of Pakistan to combat the terrorist threat and the extremism that sustains it, in a human rights compliant manner.

■ **Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review**

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson: [\[16792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 178838 on Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review, what progress his Department has made on implementing recommendation number 11 of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of the FCDO's work to support persecuted Christians to ensure that training in religious literacy and belief dynamics is undertaken in all roles where that understanding is important before each deployment.

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson: [\[16793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 178838 on Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review, which of the 22 recommendations made by the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of the FCO's work to support persecuted Christians are yet to be fully delivered or significantly progressed.

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson: [\[16794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 178838 on Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review, what progress has been made on implementing recommendation number 12 of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of the FCO's work to support persecuted Christians which calls for the establishment of a clear framework for reporting by posts to include engagement with majority and minority religious leaders, local civil society and NGOs, plus engagement where appropriate with representatives of such diaspora communities in the UK.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022. At a country level, Ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern, and discuss practices and laws that discriminate on the basis of religion or belief.

On recommendation 11, the FCDO is currently working with an external implementer to develop training for staff on religion for international engagement. The implementer, the Edward Cadbury Centre at the University of Birmingham, is consulting with a wide range of external stakeholders, including those that work

specifically on Christian Persecution. The training will support our work on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, including amplifying the FoRB toolkit.

Posts across the FCDO network regularly report on the local human rights situation, including in relation to the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief, and reflect engagement with the host government, religious leaders, civil society and NGOs. Staff make use of the Freedom of Religion or Belief Toolkit to establish a baseline for their reporting. In line with recommendation 12 of the Bishop of Truro's review, good progress is being made on developing a framework for reporting on FoRB. It will include guidance on who to engage with, and how to form recommendations for action.

■ Rohingya

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[16826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the impact on the Rohingya of the United Nations reportedly sharing data on the Rohingya without their consent.

Nigel Adams:

Following reports of data on Rohingya refugees being shared without their consent, the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, issued a statement on 15 June refuting this. The statement explains careful steps taken to ensure informed consent was obtained from refugee families.

The UK Government supports the registration of Rohingya refugees to ensure they can access the assistance and protection they need. This includes the identification of protection needs of those with specific needs and vulnerabilities and establishing the right to return to Myanmar when they can do so voluntarily, safely and with dignity. We are clear that refugee data must be protected appropriately, and we are in contact with UNHCR on the issue and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Zarah Sultana:

[\[16961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of risk posed to people travelling abroad for study or work of contracting covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice has a box at the top of all pages setting out the government message that to prevent new COVID-19 variants from entering the UK, travellers should not travel to Amber or Red list countries. Every page also states the Traffic Light status for that country (Red, Amber or Green).

The FCDO currently advises against all but essential travel to many countries and territories on the basis of COVID risks. Whether travel is essential or not is a personal decision; individuals should make an informed decision on whether or not to travel

based on their personal circumstances, judgement of the risks, relevant legislation or regulations where they are resident and the entry requirements of their destination country.

■ Tropical Diseases: Drugs

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[16917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reductions in the aid budget focused on neglected tropical diseases, what estimate he has made of the number of recipient countries that have stockpiles of medicines that are unable to be distributed.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) is currently working with implementing partners, drug companies, donors and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to exit the Accelerating the Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (ASCEND) programme as responsibly as possible within financial constraints. We are continuing to distribute medicines in the most urgent cases. Given that these activities are ongoing, it is not possible at this stage to estimate if any of the 24 recipient countries will have medicines that will not be distributed. The full results of the programme will be published by early 2022.

Global health remains a top priority for UK ODA and we will continue to be a major contributor in leading international action to strengthen global health security and help build more resilient health systems. Departmental cross-government allocations of ODA spend for 2021/22 were laid out in a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament on 21 April and the Foreign Secretary highlighted that FCDO will spend £1,305 million on global health, which means that we will remain among the most generous international donors.

■ Ukraine: Corruption

Catherine West: [\[16180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to President Biden's recent comments on alleged corruption in Ukraine, whether the UK Government is making an assessment of the potential merits of taking additional steps to help support anti-corruption activities in Ukraine.

Wendy Morton:

Corruption remains a major threat to Ukraine's stability and national security. The UK is supporting a range of anti-corruption programmes in Ukraine, through the Good Governance and Conflict, Stability and Security Funds. The UK has also invested significantly in the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine and supported the establishment of the High Anti-Corruption Court. These are critical pieces of the anti-corruption machinery, which should make a significant contribution to preventing, investigating and punishing corruption. It is imperative that anti-corruption institutions are strengthened and allowed to work free from political

interference. This is a message that we continue to give to Ukrainian interlocutors, bilaterally and through our chairing of the G7 Ambassadors' reform group in Kyiv. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss these issues with the Ukrainian government, civil society and international partners, when I attend the Vilnius hosted Ukraine Reform Conference on 7/8 July this year.

■ UN World Conference against Racism

Patrick Grady:

[\[16875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to announce a decision on the Government's participation in the planned one-day high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Nigel Adams:

The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, including antisemitism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. Following historic concerns regarding antisemitism, the UK has decided not to attend the UN's Durban Conference anniversary event, later this year.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion: Drugs

Scott Benton:

[\[15421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to abortion pills sent through the post, what estimate his Department has made of the number of women who have chosen not to take those pills so received since those arrangements have been in place; what steps his Department is taking to ensure that untaken abortion pills are retrieved or safely disposed of; and what assessment his Department has made of the risks to (a) children of finding and taking those pills and (b) women of taking those pills at a later date and past their expiry date.

Helen Whately:

The Department has made no such estimate. Abortion providers should provide women with information on what to do with the pills if they choose not to take them after they have been received, for example returning pills to a pharmacy, clinic or general practitioner for safe disposal.

■ Blood Cancer: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[16935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to research the effectiveness of covid-19 vaccines for people with blood cancers.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As part of the COVID-19 Immunity National Core Study, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is providing initial funding of £1.8 million for 12 months towards the OCTAVE study, examining the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in clinically at-risk groups, including those with certain blood cancers. UKRI is also supporting the COVID-19 Data and Connectivity National Core Studies Programme with an investment of up to £15.2 million, which will enable studies including the evaluation of vaccine uptake and efficacy across all populations, including people with blood cancer.

■ **Brain: Tumours****Seema Malhotra:**[\[11560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with representatives of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) on including brain tumour (a) experts and (b) patient advocates on the NIHR panel that considers brain tumour research proposals.

Edward Argar:

The Department has discussed the role of brain tumour experts with the National Institute for Health Research. There have been no discussions on patient advocates as all committees include public members who bring the patient and public perspective to discussions.

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[13134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether, from 21 June 2021, all care home visits can resume with covid-19 testing procedures in place.

Helen Whately:

From 21 June, our guidance will allow care home residents to go on visits out of the care home without any need to isolate afterwards, except when staying overnight in hospital or where the visit is deemed high-risk following an assessment by the care home. All care home residents should have the opportunity to nominate an 'essential care giver', who can continue to visit during periods of isolation or during an outbreak. There remain some limited restrictions on visits in care homes. We will further ease restrictions on visiting when it is safe to do so.

■ **Carers****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[14138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with the charities involved with Carers Week to discuss further support for unpaid carers.

Helen Whately:

We have shown our support for Carers Week through meetings with carers, social media and a pledge on the Carers Week Pledge website. We will continue to work closely with charities, care organisations and the wider sector.

■ Carers: Health

Rachael Maskell: [\[15313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support he plans to provide to support the mental health and wellbeing of (a) carers and (b) young carers.

Rachael Maskell: [\[15315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he takes to support young carers at the transition point at the end of their formal education.

Helen Whately:

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, carers and young carers have legal rights to an assessment of and support for, their needs where eligible, including a duty to promote an individual's 'wellbeing' and consider the impact of the role as a carer on their wellbeing.

We have provided carers with guidance which includes advice on their health and wellbeing and funding to Carers UK to extend their support phoneline. We have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance on reopening day services to provide important respite to carers.

■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Rachael Maskell: [\[14013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what training is provided (a) in medical schools, (b) for GPs and (c) for hospital doctors on (a) ME and (b) similar conditions.

Helen Whately:

Each individual medical school in the England sets its own undergraduate curriculum which must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC), as the regulator of the medical profession. The GMC would expect that, in fulfilling these standards, newly qualified doctors are able to identify and treat or manage any care needs a person has, including relating to chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) and other similar conditions.

CFS/ME and similar conditions are also specifically included in postgraduate medical curricula for general practice and for other specialties where it is most likely to be encountered, such as paediatrics, tropical medicine and allergy and immunology. The training curricula for postgraduate trainee doctors is set by the relevant Royal College and must also meet the standards set by the GMC.

Emma Hardy: [\[2421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the mental health effect of stigma on people with myalgic encephalomyelitis; and what plans he has to tackle those effects.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[13933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of patients admitted to hospitals with covid-19 were discharged in under 24 hours in England and Wales in each month since January 2021.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[13935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were (a) admitted to hospital with covid-19 and (b) discharged from hospital having been admitted with covid-19 in each month since January 2021.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: The information is not currently held in the format requested. The audited data is due to be published by NHS Digital in September 2021.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Ben Bradley:

[\[10614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Hydrogen Peroxide Vapour (HPV) pilots announced by his Department in September 2020, which two UK suppliers have been selected; what application process was used to select those two suppliers; and what the results of those pilots were.

Jo Churchill:

The Health and Safety Executive investigated whether hydrogen peroxide could be used to decontaminate single use FFP3 masks to extend their use. Inivos and Bioquell were selected as the two suppliers for the trial as they could establish the pilots quickly and had the necessary equipment needed within trusts.

Swatches were used to monitor bacteria growth. There were a significant number with bacterial growth that had been incubated post-decontamination. Therefore, the approach of using hydrogen peroxide vapour was unsuccessful.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[16057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of testing people with a suppressed or no immune system for antibodies after they have been vaccinated against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Virus Watch data, supported by NHS Test and Trace, provides information regarding patients' antibodies and this includes immunocompromised patients as part of their cohort. The data suggests some protection against COVID-19, but is only one

measure and does not look at cellular immunity which may be more important in terms of long-term immunity.

Each antibody test will vary in its sensitivity and specificity and there is currently no agreed level of antibody which indicates someone is immune. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation will continue to review evidence on the use of vaccines in those with immunosuppression and will update its advice as necessary.

Anne Marie Morris:

[16120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement from the US Food and Drug Administration on the poor efficacy of Innova covid-19 tests, whether he has plans for the (a) authorisation of alternative covid-19 rapid lateral flow tests, including those being produced in the UK and (b) extension of the exceptional use authorisation from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority following the extension of covid-19 restrictions.

Jo Churchill:

We are planning to diversify the supply of lateral flow devices (LFDs) and have begun to deploy other products in some settings, including the Orient Gene device. We will expand this over the coming months.

In December last year, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) provided the Department with an Exceptional Use Authorisation (EUA) which permits NHS Test and Trace to deploy the repurposed Innova COVID-19 as a self-test device throughout the United Kingdom as a test to detect infection in asymptomatic individuals. At this time an EUA was necessary due to a limited pool of suppliers offering a device which had passed the Government's relevant validation tests and no suppliers had a CE mark for a COVID-19 self-test LFD. We will continue to work closely with the MHRA to ensure all available tests are safe and effective.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[16170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to regulate Test to Release providers listed on the gov.uk website; and whether providers will be removed from that website in the event that they do not provide a satisfactory service.

Jo Churchill:

Providers listed on GOV.UK have declared and evidenced compliance with the relevant minimum standards for their commercial provision of testing, including participating in the three-staged United Kingdom Accreditation Service process if they are providing sample collection and/or test analysis services.

The Department is working closely with private providers to ensure appropriate standards of performance are met. Private providers' performance is continually monitored including their ability to provide samples, analysis and report results on time. The Department takes rapid action when providers deliver inadequate services. This includes providers receiving a five-day warning to demonstrate they have

rectified their service and if they do not, they are removed from the appropriate GOV.UK list.

Daisy Cooper: [16223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to monitor Government-approved private providers of covid-19 tests to ensure they comply with their (a) service standards and (b) advertised turnaround times.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is working closely with private providers to ensure appropriate standards of performance are met. Performance is continually monitored including the ability to provide samples, analysis and report results on time. The Department takes rapid action when providers deliver inadequate services. This includes providers receiving a five-day warning to demonstrate they have rectified their service and if they do not, they are removed from the appropriate GOV.UK list.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Stella Creasy: [10373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) covid-19 vaccinations have been administered and (b) people are eligible for those vaccinations, by ethnicity, in each of the wards in Waltham Forest where that data is available over the last five months.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 9 June 2021]: Data on vaccinations and population eligibility, including by ethnicity, is not held at ward level. NHS England and Improvement publish weekly vaccination data by ethnicity and region which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

The data published by NHS England is regularly reviewed.

Damian Hinds: [14152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 4578 on exploring prioritisation of immunocompromised individuals for the planned autumn booster covid-19 vaccine programme, what key clinical studies will be considered in the decision-making process for that programme; and when the data used to inform decisions will be published.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has asked the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to consider the need for and timing of additional doses of COVID-19 vaccines. The JCVI will consider available evidence from a range of sources in its deliberations but is not able to confirm which studies will be available at this stage. The JCVI's deliberations will be published in due course.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Artificial Intelligence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[14047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service Artificial Intelligence (AI) Laboratory is leading the Department's work to accelerate the safe, ethical and effective development and use of AI-driven technologies to help tackle challenges in health and social care, including earlier cancer detection, addressing priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan and relieving pressure on the workforce. The Department incurred expenditure of £17 million in 2020/21 related to the delivery of programmes within the NHS AI Lab. There was no prior expenditure in previous financial years.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence

Rachael Maskell:

[\[16895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long on average his Department has taken to respond to letters from (a) Labour hon. Members and (b) hon. Members from other political parties in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Edward Argar:

The Department treats all correspondence from hon. Members equally and does not routinely measure correspondence response times by political party.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Rachael Maskell:

[\[16896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long on average his Department has taken to respond to (a) named day and (b) ordinary day written parliamentary questions tabled by (i) Labour hon. Members and (ii) hon. Members of other political parties in the last 12 months.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Diabetes

Jim Shannon:

[\[16111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his Department's policy to promote soup and shakes diets to help put diabetes into remission; and if he will take steps to increase funding for research into that matter.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England launched the low-calorie diet (LCD) pilot programme in September 2020, following a commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan. It provides LCD treatment for people living with type 2 diabetes who are overweight or obese. The LCD programme requires participants to substitute all meals with specifically formulated total diet replacement products, for example soups and shakes, for 12 weeks alongside engagement with a 12-month behaviour change and weight maintenance support package.

While there are no immediate plans to increase research funding into the matter, NHS England is now testing different service delivery models for up to 5,000 people across 10 integrated care systems to understand how these services can best be delivered at scale by the National Health Service.

Disability: Coronavirus**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[8717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties have been refused assisted tests at covid-19 test centres.

Jo Churchill:

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

Eyes: Tumours**Jim Shannon:**[\[16107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on the planned timescale for robotic surgery to treat eye tumours to become available in Northern Ireland.

Jo Churchill:

We have had no such discussions, as this is a devolved matter.

Furs: Farms**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[15265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department held discussions at the G7 summit on the potential (a) public health risk of and (b) merits of banning fur farming; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

No such discussions were held.

Health Services**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[15409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that patients are signposted, when presenting, to the correct NHS service.

Jo Churchill:

Under Primary Care Network (PCN) Direct Enhanced Services, PCNs are able to recruit new roles to expand their care team with 100% reimbursement through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). Care coordinators are one of several roles funded by the ARRS and their responsibilities include signposting patients to National Health Service and other appropriate services. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement's and Public Health England's 'Help us help you' campaign encourages the public to access the NHS services they need.

Health Services: Finance**Rachael Maskell:**[\[16158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding formula will be used to determine (a) the allocation of funding to integrated care systems and (b) the distribution of that funding (i) to primary care and (ii) to secondary care.

Edward Argar:

We are proposing to establish statutory integrated care systems, made up of an integrated care board (ICB) and integrated care partnership.

The allocation of resources to each ICB will be determined by NHS England, with the objective of ensuring equal access for equal need, building on the existing approach to setting allocations for clinical commissioning groups and taking account of advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation.

Hospitals: Greater London**Ms Diane Abbott:**[\[3790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will ring-fence funding for the Palliative Care Unit at the Whipps Cross Hospital.

Edward Argar:

The proposed redevelopment of Whipps Cross does not involve the reconfiguration of services and envisages the new hospital providing the same core services as today, including the continued provision of high-quality specialist palliative and end of life care. A clinically led review of the model of care for the provision of specialist palliative care and end-of-life care in the new hospital is being undertaken by Barts Health NHS Trust, working closely with local partners and informed by engagement with patients and local interest groups.

Hospitals: Rural Areas**Sir Greg Knight:**[\[16018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent audit he has undertaken of the NHS estate to ensure that adequate, local hospital services in rural areas are provided and maintained; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Estates Returns Information Collection is collected and published once per year. We also collect data on land which is surplus to clinical requirements, and this is published on a quarterly basis. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, we recognise that the National Health Service estate and services in rural areas can face significant challenges. The Long Term Plan confirmed that a standard model of delivery will be developed for use in smaller acute hospitals who serve rural populations.

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease**Andrew Bridgen:**[\[13949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to develop a long-term strategy to improve services and care for adults and children with inflammatory bowel disease.

Helen Whately:

We have no specific plans to do so. However, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with front-line clinical experts, patient representative groups and leading charities, including Crohn's and Colitis UK, to improve diagnosis and treatment of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). This includes a new IBD RightCare scenario, which will set out high-quality joined-up care at every point of the patient journey, as well as data packs for local commissioners.

Andrew Bridgen:[\[13950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the need to increase funding for Inflammatory Bowel Disease services in line with recent prevalence figures.

Helen Whately:

The majority of services for people with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), who are allocated funding from NHS England and NHS Improvement using the CCG funding allocation formula. This formula takes into consideration attributes of local populations to assess the level of need.

NHS England and NHS Improvement commission some specialist services for patients with complex IBD. Funding decisions for these are made in line with local priorities and in the context of the interim funding regime in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Key Workers: Parking**Alex Cunningham:**[\[15248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government before the decision was taken to withdraw the health, care and volunteer workers parking pass.

Paula Barker:

[\[15434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has carried out an impact assessment on the financial effect of withdrawing the health, care and volunteer workers parking pass from those eligible for that pass.

Paula Barker:

[\[15435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government before the decision was taken to withdraw the health, care and volunteer workers parking pass.

Edward Argar:

Departmental officials have had regular discussions with officials at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

No impact assessment has been undertaken. Local authorities are responsible for their own parking criteria and make decisions on providing this free parking locally.

■ Kidney Diseases: Health Services

Dan Jarvis:

[\[245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 186168 on Kidney Diseases: Health Services, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adults on dialysis are able to access psychosocial support under the adult renal service specification.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 186168 on Kidney Diseases: Health Services, what plans his Department has to update the adult renal service specification.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) Specialised Commissioning is undertaking a National Adult Renal Services Transformation Programme (RSTP). The RSTP has identified psychosocial support within renal services as a key theme for improvement and will consider the service model for adult renal services, including whether any amendments to the service specifications are required. Further updates on this work will be made available as the programme develops. The service specification does acknowledge the significant impact that renal failure can have on an individual's mental health and advises that service providers should offer patients access to social worker advice and psychology services.

In March 2021 we launched the Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, backed by an additional £500 million for 2021/22, to ensure that we have the right mental health support in place over the next year. We remain committed to our ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan to expand and transform mental health services in England and to investing an additional £2.3 billion a year in mental health services by 2023/24.

■ Long Covid: Research

Gareth Thomas: [\[15163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research his Department has commissioned on (a) long covid and (b) other autoimmune conditions and their treatment; what assessment he has made of the potential correlation between long covid and gender; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have funded a post-hospitalisation COVID-19 study to understand and improve long-term health outcomes for people hospitalised with COVID-19 and four research studies specifically looking at the long-term effects in non-hospitalised individuals. In addition, a second 'long' COVID-19 research call is currently underway.

Part of the research studies will be investigating possible risk factors including any possible correlation with gender.

There is a range of active research on a range of auto immune conditions and their treatments. In the past three years, 91 research awards have been made.

■ Lung Diseases

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[11516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is the median time to a diagnosis of Pulmonary Fibrosis, from first presentation to a GP with respiratory symptoms, for each hospital Trust in England, for each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not collected in the format requested.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[11517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to allocate funding to the roll-out of NHS diagnostic hubs for patients with respiratory symptoms.

Jo Churchill:

For 2021/22, £325 million of capital funding has been allocated for diagnostic services. Discussions on how funding will be allocated are ongoing, including the establishment of community diagnostic hubs (CDHs). Diagnostics for respiratory conditions are part of the proposed 'core' services to be provided by CDHs. Pending the funding allocation, plans for mobilisation of CDHs from across England are currently under review and we anticipate some early adopter sites to provide services from summer 2021 with further CDHs opening in autumn.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose:

[\[10307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to letters from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 7 March and 5 May 2021 on pay for NHS staff on behalf of his constituent John Weeks.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 17 June 2021.

■ **Menopause**

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[16019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the training GPs and other medical professionals receive on the treatment of perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Each medical school in the England sets its own undergraduate curriculum which must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC) in its Outcomes for Graduates. The GMC updated the Outcomes for Graduates in 2018, following extensive engagement and consultation with medical education experts. The GMC would expect that, in fulfilling these standards, newly qualified doctors are able to identify, treat and manage any care needs a person has, including the menopause and perimenopause.

The training curricula for postgraduate trainee doctors is set by the relevant Royal College and must also meet the standards set by the GMC. The perimenopause and menopause are included in the curriculum set by the Royal College of General Practitioners and emphasised in the College's clinical topic guides, which supplement the curriculum.

■ **Menopause: West Midlands**

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[16020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the number of menopause clinics in the West Midlands.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Menopause clinics are operated by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and implemented as local services. CCGs have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services that meet the needs of their whole population, including the provision of menopause clinics.

■ **Mental Health Services**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) need for services to provide (i) mental health diagnosis, (ii) dual diagnosis for

substance misuse and mental health and (iii) eating disorder diagnosis, (b) availability of services to meet the needs of patients diagnosed and requiring treatment for those conditions, (c) support required by the mental health workforce to meet the change in the level of demand for such services as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, (d) training needs for additional staff required for the mental health sector; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas:

[13015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has been made of the (a) need for services to provide children and young people with (i) mental health diagnosis, (ii) dual diagnosis for substance misuse and mental health and (iii) eating disorder diagnosis, (b) availability of services to meet the needs of patients diagnosed and requiring treatment, (c) support needed by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Family Eating Disorder Services workforce to manage the change in the level of demand for such services, (d) training needs for the additional staff needed for the CAMHS and FEDS sector as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no such assessment. Initial referral to mental health services can be generated in a variety of settings. For children and young people, this may include schools and colleges and, where operational, mental health support teams. Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for the planning and commissioning of healthcare services for their populations, based on need.

Caroline Lucas:

[13016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the level of need for Psychiatric Intensive Care beds for (a) adults and (b) children and young people; what steps he is taking to (i) replace provision that has closed and (ii) ensure patients are able to access beds within their local area; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In some local areas there is a genuine need for more psychiatric intensive care unit (PICU) adult beds. There are some young people awaiting admission to a PICU bed, of which the vast majority are currently in an inpatient bed and awaiting transfer. The remainder are being appropriately supported in the community while awaiting admission. Gaps in service provision, including those as a result of unit closures, are being addressed in part through additional revenue and capital investment in new units and pooling capacity between neighbouring providers where appropriate. However, this should always be considered as part of whole system transformation to reduce overall reliance on hospital-based care.

Caroline Lucas:

[13018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of assessments for (a) autism and (b) other neurodevelopmental differences have been

carried out (i) within six months, (ii) within one year and (iii) over one year in (1) in Brighton and Hove and (2) England in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The information is not available in the format requested.

Marco Longhi:

[\[15419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle mental health issues in men; and how many people have accessed mental health services, by gender in each of the last three years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We know that men are less likely to seek help or talk about mental health issues and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy highlights men, especially middle-aged and young men, as a group at high risk of suicide. Every local authority now has a multi-agency suicide prevention plan in place and we are working with local government to assure the effectiveness of those plans. We have issued guidance to local authorities that highlights the importance of working across all local services, including the voluntary sector, to target high risk groups such as men.

We are expanding and transforming mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan, to ensure that 380,000 more adults can access psychological therapies by 2023/24. For those with severe needs or in crisis, all National Health Service mental health providers have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines.

The following table shows numbers of referrals and starts for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services and numbers in contact with secondary mental health, learning disability and autism services in each of the last three years for which data is available.

YEAR* AND GENDER**	NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH NHS- FUNDED SECONDARY MENTAL HEALTH, LEARNING DISABILITIES AND AUTISM SERVICES		REFERRALS ENTERING TREATMENT FOR IAPT SERVICES
	NUMBER OF REFERRALS TO IAPT SERVICES		
2019-20	2,878,636	1,694,790	1,165,653
Males	1,347,739	584,151	398,153
Females	1,479,739	1,094,413	761,270
2018-19	2,726,721	1,603,643	1,092,296
Males	1,310,418	561,121	378,602

YEAR* AND GENDER**	NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH NHS-FUNDED SECONDARY MENTAL HEALTH, LEARNING DISABILITIES AND AUTISM SERVICES	NUMBER OF REFERRALS TO IAPT SERVICES	REFERRALS ENTERING TREATMENT FOR IAPT SERVICES
Females	1,403,057	1,026,442	707,910
2017-18	2,510,745	1,439,957	1,009,035
Males	1,207,679	508,477	351,017
Females	1,295,791	918,305	653,308

Notes:

*The number of providers submitting data has increased over the 2017-18 to 2019-20 period, which may account for some of the increase in rates.

** Gender subtotals do not add up to the total number of people because the total includes those for whom gender was invalid or missing.

■ Mental Health Services: Greater London

Helen Hayes:

[\[10523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve culturally-focused mental health care for (a) Lambeth and (b) Southwark.

Helen Hayes:

[\[10525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help mental health services in (a) Lambeth and (b) Southwark meet the increase in demand as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 9 June 2021]: The National Health Service in Lambeth and Southwark has co-designed and co-produced a culturally appropriate peer support and advocacy service operating from Living Well Centres where community mental health teams are based.

Additional investment from NHS England and NHS Improvement's community mental health transformation programme is being utilised to build additional capacity and provide more early, preventative and personalised support for the Lambeth and Southwark communities.

We announced an additional £500 million in 2021/22 to support people with a variety of mental health conditions.

Local systems are working with their partner organisations, including clinical commissioning groups and local authorities in Lambeth and Southwark, to agree their mental health finance planning for financial year 2021/22.

■ **Mental Health Services: Young People**

Damien Moore:

[\[16207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure mental health support is available to young people in (a) Southport and (b) Sefton.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In Southport and Sefton, children's and young people's mental health services will receive additional investment from 2021/22 to support COVID-19 recovery, reduce waiting times and improve access. A local 24 hours, seven days a week mental health crisis helpline was developed and implemented at the start of the pandemic. There are two mental health support teams in the Southport area, based in schools, to provide mental health interventions and advice to pupils/teachers in schools and colleges for low to moderate level mental health conditions. A further team will be implemented in 2022/23, supporting a further 20 schools.

An online resource 'Kooth' has been recommissioned with Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to provide digital support to young people in the Southport and Sefton areas. A 'one stop shop' online mental health referral and information platform was launched in May 2021 to enable children, young people, parents and professionals to make direct referrals to mental health services and to access information and self-help materials. A comprehensive mental health training and support programme was delivered locally to bolster the skills and knowledge of school and college staff in supporting children's and young people's mental health.

■ **Muscular Dystrophy**

Mr John Baron:

[\[15176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps the Government and NHS have taken to improve research, treatment and outcomes for Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Jo Churchill:

The Government published the new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework in January 2021, outlining the key priorities for rare diseases including improving access to specialist care, treatments and drugs. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published guidance recommending ataluren for the treatment of eligible patients with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, subject to a managed access agreement which has recently been extended from July 2021 to January 2023.

Since 2018, the National Institute for Health Research has directly funded four studies relating to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in addition to providing infrastructure support to 86 studies.

■ **Myelodysplastic Syndromes: Drugs**

Grahame Morris: [\[16068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle regional disparities in drug access for MDS patients in England.

Grahame Morris: [\[16069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of access to relevant drugs for MDS patients in England.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for providing evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service on whether medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE has published guidance recommending azacitidine for the treatment of myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), and lenalidomide for treating MDS associated with an isolated deletion 5q cytogenetic abnormality. The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended in a NICE appraisal and both medicines are routinely funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement for eligible patients in line with NICE's recommendations.

■ **NHS: Parking**

Rachael Maskell: [\[15302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long NHS staff will be entitled to continue parking free of charge at their place of work; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits continuing that policy beyond the end of the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

On 25 March 2020, the Government committed to provide free car parking for staff at National Health Service facilities for the duration of the pandemic, and trusts continue to be funded to deliver this commitment. No such assessment has currently been made.

■ **Obesity: Children**

Colleen Fletcher: [\[16864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children under five years old who are (a) obese and (b) overweight in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England; and what steps he is taking to tackle childhood obesity.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England does not hold data in the format requested.

We published 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' in July 2020. Actions include banning the advertising of high fat, salt and sugar

(HFSS) products being shown on TV before 9pm and consulting on a total HFSS advertising restriction online, restricting promotions of HFSS products, calorie labelling in restaurants, expanding weight management services and making conversations about weight in primary care the norm.

■ Pharmacy

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[16786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for increasing the availability of independent prescribers in community pharmacy settings; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The General Pharmaceutical Council published new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists in January 2021. The implementation of these standards will transform the education and training of pharmacists, so they are able to play a much greater role in providing clinical care to patients and the public. This will ensure that there is a supply of pharmacists qualified to independently prescribe.

■ Prostate Cancer: Nurses

Sir Paul Beresford:

[\[13840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the proposal in his Department's Integration and innovation White Paper for a Secretary of State duty to publish a report every Parliament to support workforce planning responsibilities, whether he plans to include an audit of clinical nurse specialists who work in prostate cancer in that report.

Helen Whately:

There is no plan for this duty to entail undertaking an audit in relation to clinical nurse specialists working in prostate cancer, nor any other health professions or medical conditions.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[16002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason table service is currently required in pubs.

Jo Churchill:

The Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies have advised that 'the disinhibitory effects of alcohol are likely to exacerbate difficulties with social distancing'. As a result, we are requiring table service for a range of venues that serve alcohol, including pubs, to reduce the likelihood of individuals attending these premises coming into close contact and reduce the transmission risk.

■ Respite Care

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[15451\]](#)

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

Helen Whately:

The Care Act 2014 introduced rights for carers, which means they now have legal rights to an assessment of, and support for, their needs where eligible.

We are working with local authorities, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure, the safe resumption of day services and other forms of respite care. We have also provided funding through the £1.4 billion Infection Control Fund which has been used to support the reopening of day and respite services and worked with Social Care Institute of Excellence to publish guidance on safe re-opening.

■ Respite Care: Sefton

Damien Moore: [\[16212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the waiting times for carer's breaks and respite care services in (a) Southport and (b) Sefton.

Helen Whately:

No such assessment has been made.

■ Social Services: Migrant Workers

Paul Blomfield: [\[15236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the end of free movement on the availability of labour in the UK social care sector.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 June 2021]: The flow of EU workers into the sector annually is small comparable to the size of the workforce. Fewer than 5% of all workers joining the sector in a direct care role in 2019/20 had arrived from the EU in the previous 12 months. Therefore, we do not anticipate that there will be an immediate impact on workforce supply. We will continue to monitor the situation with regards to domestic recruitment and the flow of workers from the EU.

■ Social Services: Vacancies

Colleen Fletcher: [\[12150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of workforce vacancies in adult social care in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last five years; and what steps his Department is taking to fill those vacancies.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: The information requested is shown in the following table. The number of adult social care vacancies in Coventry prior to 2019/20 is not available in the format requested.

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
England	78,000	81,000	90,000	97,000	93,000
West Midlands	7,500	7,500	9,000	10,500	8,500
Coventry	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	600

Source: Skills for Care

We have run a national recruitment campaign across broadcast, digital and social media. The latest phase of the campaign ran from February to April 2021. We are also working with the Department for Work and Pensions to promote adult social care careers to jobseekers.

■ **Surgery: Waiting Lists**

Sir Alan Campbell:[\[16016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken analysis of the potential effect on the economy of NHS waiting lists for people waiting for operations.

Edward Argar:

There has been no formal analysis.

■ **Tourette's Syndrome**

Conor McGinn:[\[14172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of Health Education England's clinical psychology intake has opted to undertake a specialist placement focusing on Tourette's syndrome in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: This information is not held centrally.

Conor McGinn:[\[14173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department invested through the National Institute for Health Research into research on Tourette's syndrome in each year since 2010.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: Since 2010, £3.3 million has been invested into research on Tourette's syndrome through the National Institute for Health Research.

The following table shows spending on research on Tourette's syndrome in each financial year since 2010.

YEAR	RESEARCH SPEND
2010/11	£0
2011/12	£149,296
2012/13	£281,996
2013/14	£356,558
2014/15	£204,102
2015/16	£197,677
2016/17	£134,129
2017/18	£313,302
2018/19	£612,658
2019/20	£669,635
2020/21	£362,080

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[16050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of not putting India on the red list until 23 April 2021 on the covid-19 infection rate in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

All decisions on 'red', 'amber' or 'green' list assignment and our border regime are taken by Ministers, based on regular scrutiny of the latest scientific data, the Joint Biosecurity Centre's risk assessment and wider public health factors. The decision to place India on the 'red list' on 23 April was made rapidly once it was known that the Delta variant had concerning properties and before it was formally classified as a variant of concern. All those returning from India have been required to self-isolate and more recently, to enter a managed quarantine service. We are working with local communities and authorities to take action to limit further spread.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[16225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of private PCR tests that have been procured by people travelling to and from the UK.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no estimate of the total volume of private polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests purchased for international travel. We now collect sales data from each of the private providers offering day two and day eight testing for arrivals in the United Kingdom. Currently this accounts for approximately three quarters of the total number of tests for 'amber' and 'green' list arrivals, though this varies over time. We do not collect any private PCR sales data for people travelling from the UK.

Ian Mearns:[\[16840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department have a process in place for consumers to complain about private medical providers offering covid-19 testing in line with the travel quarantine requirements.

Jo Churchill:

Any complaints should be raised with the provider in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved, the consumer should to contact their local trading standards office. Consumers are able to complain directly with the Department about private providers as we monitor these complaints and address these directly with the provider.

HOME OFFICE**■ Animal Experiments: Coronavirus****Kenny MacAskil:**[\[16960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many animals kept in establishments licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 were killed without being used in experiments in response to projects being put on hold as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office annually publishes national statistics of scientific procedures performed using living animals under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. The statistics for the annual returns made in 2020 are scheduled for publication on 15 July 2021.

The Home Office has not collected separate data on animals kept in establishments, licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, that were killed without being used in experiments in response to projects being put on hold as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

■ Asylum: Children**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[16184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what safeguards are in place to protect unaccompanied children who are wrongly diverted to adult asylum support services.

Chris Philp:

The welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is an absolute priority. We are fully adhering to our statutory duties and we have improved both our facilities and the way we deal with arrivals in response to the unprecedented rise in small boat crossings.

Young people are prioritised to ensure the necessary welfare and security checks are completed in the shortest amount of time. After this they are collected by a local authority and cared for by social services.

We have contracted a team of social workers as a temporary measure to support the Kent Intake Unit, with the aim of strengthening the unit's age assessment and child safeguarding processes.

KIU includes a non-detained facility (called the 'Atrium') where asylum claimants are able to wait once their asylum claim has been registered and it has a specific area for minors and other vulnerable customers which is operated by the Refugee Council (NGO) under contract from the Home Office.

If there is doubt about the age of an individual, they will be referred to a Local Authority for a Merton compliant age assessment to ensure they are diverted to the correct support services.

If any concerns about a service user's age become apparent once they are in asylum support accommodation, the relevant local authority will be informed so they can take appropriate safeguarding action.

■ **Asylum: Deportation**

Bambos Charalambous: [\[16183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many pending readmission or transfer agreements to return asylum seekers the UK has with other countries.

Chris Philp:

The UK already has arrangements with many countries across the world to facilitate the returns of asylum seekers.

The Joint Political Declaration between the EU and UK agreed in December 2020 noted the UK's intention to engage in bilateral discussions with the most concerned Member States to discuss suitable practical arrangements, including on asylum and illegal migration. These discussions are continuing, and we have recently agreed a migration partnership with India.

■ **Bail: Criminal Investigation**

Mr David Davis: [\[16787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of people on pre-charge bail for over 12 months in 2019-20 are under investigation by the National Crime Agency.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collect and publish data on the number of individuals on pre-charge bail and the length of pre-charge bail. The data are published as part of 'Police Powers and Procedures' publication, available in Annex B:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2020>

However, data on the proportion of individuals on pre-charge bail under investigation by the National Crime Agency are not available.

■ British Nationality and Visas**Navendu Mishra:****[16973]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants are waiting to be processed for their visa due to the time taken to take and process citizenship tests in (a) the UK and (b) Stockport borough and constituency.

Kevin Foster:

The information requested is not held centrally; to obtain it could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Customers are required to book a Life in the UK test as part of their application for British Citizenship or Settlement in the UK and are unable to complete their application until they have passed the test.

Results are issued to the customer within 10 minutes of completing the test. If a customer fails, they need to wait 7 days before taking the test again and are able to take the test as many times as they need to.

Once a customer has passed the test and has then submitted their application, a decision will be made as soon as possible.

■ Hate Crime: Ethnic Groups**Navendu Mishra:****[16969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons her Department did not collect information on the race or ethnicity of victims of hate crime until 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

We introduced this data requirement following the successful experimental pilot to disaggregate religious hate crime data under the 2016-2020 Hate Crime Action Plan. Each new data requirement needs close engagement with forces to ensure data recording is accurate and consistent.

■ Knives: Crime

Marco Longhi:

[\[15418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of school age children linked with knife crime in (a) the UK and (b) Dudley North constituency.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is determined to turn the tide on knife crime in all areas, wherever it occurs.

Through the Serious Violence Fund (SVF), the Home Office has invested a total of £242 million over three years in the 18 police force areas most affected by serious violence. Over three years £105.5 million of the SVF has been invested in multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in the 18 areas, with £10,110,000 allocated to the West Midlands PCC to develop the West Midlands VRU. VRUs bring together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the local drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them. The remaining £136.5 million of the SVF has been allocated to the same 18 police forces to fund a surge in police operational activity. West Midlands Police have been allocated £15,541,485.00 of this funding.

In addition to the Serious Violence Fund, we have invested £200 million in early intervention and prevention support initiatives over 10 years to support children and young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence, through the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF). Moreover, this government has awarded an extra £5 million towards the expedited development of a national Centre of Excellence (CofE) to help guide government investment and national policies. In total, 12 grantees in the West Midlands are in receipt of funding from all grant rounds.

Through the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts bill, we have also introduced legislation which will place new duties on a range of specified agencies across different sectors, such as local government, youth offending, and health and probation, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence.

In the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 we have introduced specific measures to address knife crime, including the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders to help the police target those most at risk of being drawn into serious violence, to set them on a more positive path.

■ Migrants: Clothing

Dawn Butler:

[\[16047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 22 April 2021 to Question 83092, who in her Department is responsible for distributing clothing to incoming migrants; and what the process is for that matter.

Dawn Butler:

[16048]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 22 April 2021 to Question 183092 on Asylum: Clothing, if she will provide an itemised breakdown of what was purchased for the £5,415.90.

Chris Philp:

Home Office department, the Clandestine Channel Threat Command are responsible for the provision of basic clothing to migrants who are disembarked at the Tug Haven (having been intercepted crossing the channel in small boats). Migrants often cross the channel in poor weather conditions and without adequate clothing. In such circumstances they are invariably very wet and cold and at risk of hypothermia if dry clothing is not provided. This provision of dry clothing forms part of our duty of care in these circumstances, wherever possible we use recycled clothing from charitable organisations rather than buying new.

The following items were purchased, 225 pairs of lace up canvas shoes, 26 pairs of flip flops, 440 T-shirts, 333 sweatshirts and 337 jogging bottoms.

■ Migrants: Detainees

Sir Alan Campbell:

[16015]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to reduce the use of immigration detention for women who have survived torture, rape or trafficking.

Chris Philp:

The government remains committed to using detention only where necessary. Indeed, the vast majority (95%) of people liable to be removed from the UK are granted immigration bail and there continues to be a general downward trend in the use of detention since 2015.

The Home Office will always seek to facilitate voluntary return as an alternative to detention and enforced removal. Where the use of detention is considered necessary, we recognise that some people may be particularly vulnerable to harm. This is the basis of the Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention (AAR) policy, which strengthens the presumption against detention for vulnerable adults. The AAR policy enables officials to identify vulnerable individuals and consequently make balanced decisions about the appropriateness of their detention. Under the policy, women who have survived torture, rape or trafficking will be detained only when the evidence of vulnerability in their particular case is outweighed by the immigration considerations, including immigration compliance, criminality factors and expected date of removal.

Additional safeguards are also in place for those in detention displaying such vulnerabilities, including regular reviews of detention and reporting mechanisms to ensure that particularly vulnerable individuals are brought to the attention of those with direct responsibility for authorising, maintaining and reviewing detention. The recently amended decision-making process for potential victims of modern slavery

also includes a Modern Slavery Needs Assessment to identify victims' recovery needs and establish whether they can be met in detention.

All Home Office staff working in the detention system are also given training and support to identify and act upon indicators of vulnerability at the earliest opportunity.

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[16185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to reinstate (a) Action Access and (b) other alternative schemes to immigration detention.

Chris Philp:

As part of the Department's immigration detention reform programme, we are committed to a series of two pilots exploring alternatives to detention.

The first of these pilots, Action Access, provided women who would otherwise be detained with a programme of support in the community. This pilot concluded on 31 March 2021 after operating for two years, as planned. The second pilot, the Refugee and Migrant Advisory Service, is currently supporting both men and women in the community and will remain in operation for two years until June 2022.

We are working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on these pilots and they have appointed the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to independently evaluate this work. These evaluations will be published, with the evaluation report of the Action Access pilot scheduled for Summer 2021. We will use the evaluations of these pilots to inform our future approach to case-management focused alternatives to detention.

■ Nature Conservation: Seized Articles

Sir Roger Gale:

[\[15161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many items have been seized under the terms of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) in each year since 2015.

Chris Philp:

The total number of seizures from Quarter One of 2015 to Quarter One of 2020 is 5,136 items.

Seizures relating to products related to the Convention of international trade of endangered species (CITES), are published quarterly on the.gov.uk website.

■ Refugees: Resettlement

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[16186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of refugees who will be helped annually by the new UK Resettlement Scheme.

Chris Philp:

Through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) we continue to welcome vulnerable refugees in need of protection to the UK. The number of refugees we resettle every year depends on a variety of factors including local authorities' capacity and wider public sector capacity for supporting refugees and the extent to which Community Sponsorship continues to thrive. This year, the recovery from the pandemic will clearly be a significant factor affecting capacity. We are working closely with our partners to assess the capacity for resettlement in the months ahead and will continue to welcome those in need in the years to come.

Retail Trade: Abuse and Violence**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[16011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of covid-19 legislation, including enforcing social distancing and mask-wearing, on levels of violence and abuse experienced by shop workers.

Kit Malthouse:

There are no official figures on the number of assaults in a retail setting.

This Government recognises that the abuse and physical violence faced by shop staff can have a significant impact on their health, not only physically but mentally and emotionally. These crimes are unacceptable, and the Home Office is working closely with retailers and trade organisations through the National Retail Crime Steering Group to reduce violence and abuse in retail settings.

Schools: Vetting**Simon Jupp:**[\[15452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to allow people with existing DBS clearance to use that as evidence for other DBS-required roles they may undertake.

Victoria Atkins:

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS certificate each time an individual goes from one role to another, as a volunteer or paid worker in a regulated activity in the same workforce e.g. children's workforce.

The Update Service is an online subscription for standard and enhanced checks (i.e. those which individuals working with children and vulnerable people or employers will be checking against). The Update Service enables an individual to take their DBS certificate from one job to the next unless an employer asks an individual to get a new certificate, or a different type of workforce certificate is needed, e.g. 'adult workforce' to 'child workforce,' or a different level of certificate is required, e.g. standard to enhanced.

■ Wildlife: Smuggling**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[15162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on helping to prevent the illegal wildlife trade in each year since 2015.

Kit Malthouse:

Since 2016, the Home Office has provided £136,000 annually to the National Wildlife Crime Unit to bolster work preventing wildlife crime both domestically and internationally.

Going forward, all decisions on government funding will be taken as part of the next Spending Review.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Building Safety Fund****Hilary Benn:** [\[16009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the deadline for applications to the Building Safety Fund beyond the end of June 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

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

The announcement on 10 February of an additional £3.5 billion of funding means that leaseholders and residents in eligible buildings can be reassured that unsafe non-ACM cladding on their blocks will be replaced. All registrants should continue to ensure that everything is done to maximise the pace of remediation and to continue to make progress with their applications to the Building Safety Fund to ensure that remedial works are carried out as soon as possible.

Lucy Powell: [\[16852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June to Question 14162 on Building Safety Fund, for how many applications to the Building Safety Fund management and administrative fees have accounted for 10 per cent or more of the total application.

Christopher Pincher:

As set out in the answer to Questions UIN 11562 and UIN 11563, the Department has not analysed management fees or administrative fees across the Building Safety Fund given the cost benchmarking safeguards that are in place for each individual project.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[16012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2021 to Question 6197 on unsafe cladding, whether leaseholders in buildings between 11 and 18 metres will be compensated for costs already billed to them for remediation work on unsafe cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

We are working to develop the underpinning details of the finance scheme to ensure it protects leaseholders, prioritising affordability and accelerating remediation. Further detail on the finance scheme will be made available as soon as possible.

Sarah Olney:[\[16912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to provide more information on the loan scheme for leaseholders in buildings 11 to 18 metres high, announced on 10 February 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

We are working to develop the underpinning details of the finance scheme to ensure that it protects leaseholders, prioritises affordability and accelerates remediation. Further details on the finance scheme will be made available as soon as we are in a position to do so.

■ Camping Sites: Permitted Development Rights**James Wild:**[\[16236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the permitted development rights to establish campsites for up to 56 days usage annually, what powers local authorities have to (a) issue Article 4 directions in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to require planning permission to be sought for temporary campsites and (b) to impose controls on highway safety grounds.

Christopher Pincher:

There is a permitted development right in place which allows for the temporary use of land for up to 28 days. We have doubled the amount of days allowed in 2021 to 56 days in order to provide flexibility to local communities and businesses, including for example to run outdoor events such as car boot sales, or to temporarily use land as a campsite. Local authorities retain the ability to put in place Article 4 directions in accordance with policy set out in the NPPF. Local authorities are responsible for managing their road networks, and have duties placed on them through legislation to provide safe movement for all traffic. They have a wide range of powers and tools

available to them to deliver this through the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Highways Act 1980 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

■ First Time Buyers

Colleen Fletcher:

[16867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of completed house sales involving first-time buyers in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England during each month of the covid-19 outbreak; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of home ownership among first-time buyers in those areas.

Christopher Pincher:

We have taken steps to keep the housing market open during the Covid-19 pandemic and allow people to buy, sell and view properties during periods of national restrictions. This is supported by the temporary cut to Stamp Duty Land Tax for home buyers and underpinned by our guidance for consumers and industry on how the process can operate while minimising the risks presented by the virus.

Over 708,000 households have been helped to purchase a home since Spring 2010 through Government-backed schemes such as Help to Buy: Equity Loan and Right to Buy. New initiatives including First Homes, the new model of Shared Ownership and the £11.5 billion affordable homes programme will bring more affordable housing to those who need it.

Data on the number of first-time buyers using Help to Buy: Equity Loans indicates that, despite a drop in the earlier stages of the pandemic, the number of first-time buyers who bought a home in England in Q4 2020 using a Help to Buy equity loan exceeds the number in Q4 2019, before the pandemic, with 17,348 and 12,262 first-time buyers respectively. A recovery can be seen in the number of first-time buyers in the West Midlands, the Coventry North East constituency and across Coventry. This data is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-december-2020>.

The English Housing Survey is published annually and reports on housing trends in England, including homeownership rates. Data for 2019-20 is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>. Data for 2020-21 will be published at the end of this year.

■ First Time Buyers: Hampstead and Kilburn

Tulip Siddiq:

[16173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to introduce First Homes housing in the Hampstead and Kilburn constituency.

Christopher Pincher:

On 24 May we issued a written ministerial statement implementing new planning policy to ensure that First Homes will be delivered in all parts of England in the future, and I look forward to seeing First Homes come forward as part of developments in Hampstead and Kilburn and across the country.

We also recently launched the first batch of First Homes in Bolsover, Derbyshire, meaning that First Homes are now on sale and this manifesto commitment is now a reality. We will be bringing more pilots out in other areas across England, and we are also keen to work with local authorities to deliver First Homes at the earliest opportunity, so that local residents and key workers can benefit from this flagship new home ownership offer as quickly as possible.

Hate Crime**Navendu Mishra:**[\[16970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to raise awareness of hate crime and encourage reporting in addition to the Hate Crime Action Plan, published in 2016, and the 2018 Refresh.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is now considering a range of options to tackle hate crime beyond the current action plan. We will work with other departments and civil society partners to explore possible approaches, and to ensure a range of views from communities are taken into consideration.

Holiday Accommodation**Caroline Lucas:**[\[16064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the report published by AirBnB in June 2021 on short-term lets regulation; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

We want to encourage responsible short-term letting, where hosts behave in accordance with the law and with respect for both their guests' safety and their neighbours' peace. The Considerate Short-Term Lets Charter currently helps hosts to do so.

The Tourism Recovery Plan, published on 11 June 2021 by The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport commits to consulting on the introduction of a Tourist Accommodation Registration Scheme in England.

■ Housing: Insulation

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[15157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what protection he has made available to leaseholders to prevent freeholders making them forfeit their leases due to inability to pay (a) cladding and (b) other fire safety-related costs demanded in service charge bills rendered for payment prior to the introduction of planned government fire-safety remedial compensation schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 17 June 2021]: The Government believes that forfeiture is a draconian measure and should only be used as a last resort. In practice forfeiture happens very rarely and is subject to the right of relief, to be exercised at the court's discretion. Any changes to forfeiture will require a careful balancing of the rights and responsibilities of landlords and leaseholders. As a first step, we have asked the Law Commission to update their 2006 report Termination of Tenancies for Tenant Default given the passage of time, and to take into account the implications of the reforms currently underway. We will then consider what action may be needed, including potential legislative measures.

The Government is providing £5 billion of funding to protect leaseholders living in residential buildings over 18 metres with unsafe cladding from the costs of remediation. Leaseholders in buildings between 11 and 18 metres will be able to access finance for cladding remediation, with a commitment that they will not have to pay more than £50 per month towards these remediation costs. Government funding does not absolve building owners of their responsibility to ensure their buildings are safe. 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 seen many responsible developers and building owners stepping up to take responsibility for correcting these defects - for example, in more than half of the high-rise private sector buildings with ACM.

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Robert Largin:

[\[15443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to make more resources available for local authorities to (a) hire and (b) support staff with the expertise to deliver comprehensive decarbonisation plans.

Eddie Hughes:

Government recognises the important role local authorities can play in decarbonisation and clean growth.

Ministers have a limited role in local authority workforce issues. This is because councils are independent employers, responsible for the management and

organisation of their own workforces, including managing budgets to recruit and train staff. It is for local leaders to make these decisions within the resources that they have available, and we know many have recruited large, dedicated climate change teams, while others have secured carbon literacy training to ensure Planning Officers and other staff have the expertise they need to build decarbonisation into their functions.

In the Planning for the Future White Paper my department committed to develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms, which are aligned with Net Zero goals.

Net Zero is a priority for the whole of Government. DfT and BEIS have also taken steps to ensure local authorities have the necessary capabilities to take action locally. For example, the BEIS Local Energy Programme was established to help them fulfil this role, and Local Energy Hubs have been established to provide local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships with access to technical and commercial support for the initial stages of developing low carbon energy projects.

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

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[14207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Eddie Hughes:

The opportunities and considerations associated with the use of AI continue to be explored, as outlined in the guidance on building and using artificial intelligence in the public sector, published on Gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/a-guide-to-using-artificial-intelligence-in-the-public-sector>.

■ **Parking: Key Workers**

Zarah Sultana:

[16235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the extension of covid-19 restrictions beyond 21 June 2021, what assessment has he made of the potential merits of extending the emergency parking passes for (a) NHS staff members, (b) health or social care workers and (c) NHS volunteer responders.

Luke Hall:

At the end of March 2020, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government reached an agreement with the Local Government Association that local councils in England would voluntarily offer free car parking to all NHS workers, social care staff and NHS volunteer responders during the emergency response period.

With the national lockdown drawing to a close, challenges in managing pass fraud and an increasing number of councils moving toward local concessions for health

workers and other groups, it was agreed that the national pass guidance should be withdrawn.

This is reflected in new joint parking enforcement advice provided in April to local authorities by the Local Government Association, British Parking Association and London Councils. In May, further updates were shared with NHS Trusts, the Royal Voluntary Service and local authorities, and the guidance page was updated on gov.uk.

Councils are responsible for setting their own local policy and are already acting on this advice, with some deciding to offer their own concessions. Those interested in local parking concessions can check their local councils' website for further details of any local schemes.

NHS staff continue to be eligible for free parking in hospital car parks and funding for this has been provided to NHS Trusts by government.

■ Permitted Development Rights

Steve Reed:

[\[16126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 April 2021 to Question 185898 on Permitted Development Rights, when the referenced impact assessment will be published.

Christopher Pincher:

As stated in the response to Question UIN 185898, we aim to publish a full Regulatory Impact Assessment on the measures as soon as possible.

Steve Reed:

[\[16856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the impact of the extensions to Permitted Development Rights introduced by his Department on Business Rates revenues for local authorities.

Christopher Pincher:

Permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission and facilitate the diversification of our high streets and town centres and will help their recovery as the country re-opens. This will help to ensure the local tax base is maintained.

■ Planning: Public Consultation

Rachael Maskell:

[\[16155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the opportunities for local people to play an active role in helping to shape local planning proposals.

Christopher Pincher:

The Planning for the Future White Paper proposes to make the planning system simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with. The current

planning system has a very poor record on community engagement and is complex, lengthy and difficult to navigate.

Our planning reforms will give communities a greater voice from the start of the planning process and make it quicker and easier for local people to have greater input to local plans and design codes, to give communities real influence over both the location and design of development.

By making plan making much more straightforward and digital, it will become easier for local people to influence plans and have their say on the location and standard of new developments.

■ Planning: Transport

Rachael Maskell:

[\[16154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to help ensure that large scale planning proposals (a) do not escalate traffic challenges and (b) are fully integrated with local transport infrastructure.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has made clear in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that any significant capacity and congestion implications from new development on the transport network need to be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. In addition, significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, which can help reduce congestion and emissions.

To ensure new developments are integrated with local transport infrastructure, the NPPF makes clear transport issues should be considered at the earliest stage of plan making and decision making so that opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure are realised and opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are identified and pursued.

As part of the planning reforms, the Government has set out proposals to change the way we plan for and design new development. We have also made clear the important role that transport can play in minimising carbon emissions. The reforms will provide an opportunity to review the current system and ensure sustainable development is a key part of any future planning system, considering how sustainable transport is planned for and delivered will be central to this.

■ Private Rented Housing: Security of Tenure

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[15365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to increase tenancy security for private renters.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market for both tenants and landlords. This will

include reforming tenancy law to abolish Section 21 evictions, improving security for tenants in the private rented sector, as well as strengthening the grounds for possession for landlords when they have valid reasons.

A White Paper detailing this reform package will be brought forward in the Autumn.

■ **Property Development: Carbon Emissions**

Rachael Maskell:

[16153]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he will take through the planning system to ensure that all new developments are carbon neutral by 2030.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out how the Government expects the planning system to help mitigate and adapt to climate change, and addresses the need to reduce carbon emissions.

The Framework expects Local Plans to take account of climate change over the longer term; local authorities should adopt proactive strategies to reduce carbon emissions and recognise the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. Support for the transition to a low carbon future is one of the core planning principles set out in the Framework.

We will amend the Framework to ensure that it targets areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, and maximising environmental benefits.

We are continuing to reflect on the detailed design of our current programme of planning reforms, in the light of the many consultation responses received, and will set out the proposed way forward shortly.

From 2025, the Future Homes Standard will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% lower CO2 emissions compared to those built to current standards. These new homes will be future-proofed with high levels of energy efficiency. No further retrofit work will be necessary to enable them to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

■ **Religious Hatred: Hinduism**

Navendu Mishra:

[16971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to renew its strategy on hinduphobia; and which stakeholders the Government plans to engage as part of that process.

Eddie Hughes:

The Hate Crime action plan (2016) and the Hate Crime action plan Refresh (2018) set out the Government's plans to tackle hatred directed at anyone for their race, sexuality, disability, gender identity or religion, including that of the Hindu community.

The Government is now considering a range of options to tackle hate crime beyond the 2018 plan. We will work with other departments and civil society partners to explore possible approaches, and to ensure a range of views from communities are taken into consideration.

■ **Social Rented Housing: Standards**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[15366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to bring forward regulatory reforms to improve standards in social rented housing.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[15367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is Government policy to implement the Social Housing White Paper in the 2021-22 Parliamentary Session.

Eddie Hughes:

The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper will improve the lives of social housing residents in England. The package of measures underpinning the Charter will provide faster and more effective redress for residents, ensure residents are empowered to engage effectively with landlords, strengthen consumer regulation, and improve the quality and safety of social housing. We have already made strong progress on implementation: we have launched a review of the Decent Homes Standard, a working group on electrical safety, and held a consultation on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, three key aspects of our commitment to ensure safe and decent homes, as well as running a national campaign to raise resident awareness of how to seek redress. We are continuing to drive forward implementation across the full range of Charter measures. This includes drafting the legislation required to implement the new consumer regulation regime, which we will introduce as soon as practicable.

■ **Towns Fund**

Steve Reed: [\[16122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much has been spent from the Towns Fund by each qualifying town as of 15 June 2021.

Luke Hall:

All towns received accelerated funding of between £500,000 and £1 million each in September 2020 for projects that would help them deal with the immediate impact of Covid-19. So far, we have committed over £2 billion and paid out almost £90 million through accelerated funding and fast-tracked Town Deal projects.

Steve Reed: [\[16123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish a list of completed projects funded through the Towns Fund as of 15 June 2021.

Luke Hall:

The Department will be publishing an annual report on the monitoring and evaluation of the Towns Fund programme for each financial year until funding ceases in 2025/2026.

Steve Reed:

[\[16124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the risk to completion of projects of delays in bidding for funding from the Towns Fund.

Luke Hall:

Town Deal funding runs until financial year 2025/2026. We will continue to work collaboratively with local places to ensure all towns are in the best position possible to complete their Town Deal projects ahead of 2025/2026.

Steve Reed:

[\[16125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when Heads of Terms will be agreed with towns for all announced Town Deals.

Luke Hall:

We have so far agreed Heads of Terms for 53 towns. The 33 places which had their Town Deal announcements on either 8 or 9 June have three weeks following the announcements to agree Heads of Terms. The remaining 15 Town Deals will be announced in due course.

Steve Reed:

[\[16855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what criteria he used to choose projects for accelerated funding from the Towns Fund.

Luke Hall:

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 30 June 2020, Government brought forward funding to support capital projects that will have an immediate impact across the 101 towns, in particular addressing some of the challenges of Covid-19.

Local authorities worked with Town Deal Boards to identify suitable projects, and Section 151 officers provided confirmation that projects were strategically viable in their own right, and represented value for money.

Steve Reed:

[\[16858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department is working to the timetable for the Towns Fund as set out on the Towns Fund website hosted by The Towns Fund Delivery Partner.

Steve Reed:

[\[16859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it remains his Department's policy for towns to receive funding from the Towns Fund through the cohorts as set out on the Towns Fund website hosted by The Towns Fund Delivery Partner.

Luke Hall:

The cohort timetables set out on the Towns Fund Delivery Partner's website were produced when towns were still in the process submitting their Town Investment Plans. All Towns submitted those plans between July 2020 and January 2021. To date, we have offered Town Deals to 86 places. Those towns are busy turning their plans into reality and we will announce the remaining 15 Town Deals in due course.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites**Navendu Mishra:**[\[16972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support the Government is giving to local authorities to provide permanent and temporary sites for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government encourages local planning authorities to make their own assessment of need for traveller sites and in producing their local plan, to identify sites to meet that need

Local authorities and Registered Providers (like housing associations) can bid for funding through our £11.5 billion 2021-2026 Affordable Homes Programme. They can use this funding for permanent traveller sites, along with other forms of affordable housing

On behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) recently held a series of events for local authorities to enhance their understanding of planning for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers to support future site provision.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Beef: Australia****Emily Thornberry:**[\[16811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to sheep meat produced on farms that carry out the mulesing of lambs.

Emily Thornberry:[\[16812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to meat produced from livestock transported over land for up to 48 hours without rest.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to beef produced on farms that carry out the branding of cattle with hot irons.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to beef produced on farms that carry out the dehorning of cattle without pain relief.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to beef produced on farms that carry out the surgical removal of ovaries from cows without pain relief.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to sheep meat produced on farms that carry out the castration of lambs up to the age of six months without pain relief.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to pork produced on farms that carry out the castration of pigs up to the age of 21 days without pain relief.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to pork produced on farms that keep pregnant pigs confined in sow stalls.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to egg-based products from farms where laying hens are subject to the trimming of their beaks with a hot blade.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to egg-based products from farms where laying hens are confined in barren battery cages.

Emily Thornberry:

[16821]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to egg-based products from farms where laying hens are caged in stocking density as low as 550sq cm per hen.

Greg Hands:

Maintaining the UK's high domestic standards and including protections for the agriculture industry is a red line in trade negotiations. The manifesto states that in trade negotiations the Government will not compromise on high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. Imports will continue to meet the same UK food safety and biosecurity import standards as they did before.

More than 75% of Australian beef exports, and more than 70% sheep meat in 2020 were imported to Asia-Pacific markets, where the costs of beef production can be twice as high than the UK in some markets. It is unrealistic to think large volumes of beef and sheep will be diverted to the UK from those lucrative nearby markets.

The tariff reductions secured by the UK will benefit exporters across the country. By reducing tariffs, the Government are helping our farmers and food producers capitalise on the enormous global demand for British food and drink.

■ Department for International Trade: Artificial Intelligence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[14044]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, 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.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade does not make use of artificial intelligence in the implementation of its policies.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[14195]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Greg Hands:

The opportunities and considerations associated with the use of Artificial Intelligence continue to be explored, as outlined in the guidance on building and using artificial intelligence in the public sector, published on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/a-guide-to-using-artificial-intelligence-in-the-public-sector>

■ Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information**Emily Thornberry:** [\[15186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when and for what reason her Department adopted a policy of rating Freedom of Information requests red, amber or green according to the presentational risks of disclosure; and which Minister or official is responsible for the introduction of that policy.

Greg Hands:

The Department's internal Freedom of Information (FOI) case management system, which includes a colour-coding system, was introduced by officials in 2019. It is used to track timeliness and progress of responses in addition to the sensitivity of the information in all FOI cases. The Department's case management system helps evidence our compliance with our FOI obligations.

Emily Thornberry: [\[15187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when and for what reason her Department adopted a policy of categorising Freedom of Information requests according to the workplace of certain individuals making requests; and which Minister or official is responsible for the introduction of that policy.

Greg Hands:

The Department has a standard set of processes to respond to all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and these are applied regardless of who the request is from. The case management system does not categorise the workplace of individual requestors. The Department tracks timeliness and progress of responses in addition to the sensitivity of the information in all FOI cases. The Department's case management system helps evidence our compliance with our FOI obligations.

Emily Thornberry: [\[15189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what colour-coded ratings for presentational sensitivity have been given to the Freedom of Information requests (a) FOI2021/01595, (b) FOI2021/02962, (c) FOI2021/03419 and (d) FOI2021/03427 from the office of the hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury and currently being processed by her Department.

Greg Hands:

The colour-coded ratings used in the case management system are dependent on several factors, including the timeliness of the response and the sensitivity of the information we hold. The colour-coded status can also change during the processing of a request, so no individual Freedom of Information request has a fixed colour-coded identifier.

Cat Smith: [\[15287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department operates a red, amber and green rating system for categorising Freedom of Information requests according to their presentational sensitivity.

Greg Hands:

All Freedom of Information (FOI) requests are treated exactly the same, regardless of who the request is from and their occupation. The Department's internal FOI case management system, which includes a colour-coding system, is used to track timeliness and progress of responses in addition to the sensitivity of the information in all FOI cases. The Department's case management system helps evidence our compliance with our FOI obligations.

Exports**Alexander Stafford:**[\[15453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has to introduce a certified UK environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards scheme to label goods and services for international export.

Greg Hands:

In our outline approaches to Free Trade Agreements with the US, New Zealand, and Australia, we have committed to maintaining and protecting the UK's world-leading environment and labour standards. We are also committed to securing provisions that will help trade in low carbon goods and services, supporting research and development in sectors such as offshore wind and smart energy systems.

We recognise the role that eco-labelling and other forms of consumer information can play in supporting positive environmental outcomes. We are currently seeking powers through the Environment Bill to establish mandatory labelling schemes, where appropriate, for products placed on the UK market, which would be subject to impact assessments and consultation.

Free Trade**Alexander Stafford:**[\[15454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the importance of environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards to (a) international and (b) UK free trade.

Greg Hands:

In our outline approaches to Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the US, New Zealand, and Australia, we have committed to high labour and environmental standards, for example by supporting Research and Development and innovation in sectors such as offshore wind. The Government also publishes scoping assessments of the broad impacts of new FTAs, prior to negotiations commencing. These include preliminary assessments of the potential implications for the environment.

Internationally, the UK is also intent on demonstrating global leadership at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other multilateral forums. In March last year, the Secretary of State for International Trade announced that the environment would be one of the UK's top priorities at the WTO.

■ Iron and Steel: Import Duties**Holly Mumby-Croft:**[\[17028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of amending section 51 of the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018 ahead of the end of UK steel safeguard measures on 30 June 2021.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government remains committed to protecting domestic industries against unfair practices, such as dumping and subsidies, surge of imports and market distortions.

The Secretary of State will make a decision to accept or reject the TRA recommendation soon. Her powers in this respect are limited: she can only accept or reject the recommendation as a whole.

In addition, I can confirm that the Secretary of State is taking a close look at the tools available to her to protect British industry and to deal with unexpected import surges and unfair trading practices.

■ Livestock: Australia**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[16808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the legality of (a) barren battery cages, (b) sow stalls, (c) hormone-fed beef, (d) hot branding and (e) mulesing in Australia on (i) food and (ii) farming standards in the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has always been clear that this deal will not compromise the UK's high standards. Imports will still have to meet the same UK food safety and biosecurity import standards as they did before.

This deal will also not unfairly undercut UK farmers. The Government has agreed a ground-breaking non-regression clause on animal welfare, which means that neither country can lower their animal welfare standards to undercut the other. The Government has also agreed a general safeguard mechanism which will provide a safety net for industry if they face serious injury from increased imports as a direct consequence of the Free Trade Agreement.

■ Meat Products: Australia**Emily Thornberry:**[\[16810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to meat produced from livestock treated with growth-promoting antibiotics.

Greg Hands:

The UK is a world leader in the battle against antimicrobial resistance – significantly cutting its use of antibiotics in farming. The Government have reached agreement

with Australia to cooperate on combatting anti-microbial resistance, including a commitment to ensure appropriate use of and reduced need for antibiotics.

Imports to the UK will still have to meet the same UK food safety and biosecurity import standards, including clear controls on limits of veterinary medicine residues in meat and other animal products, as they did before. The use of antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed remains banned in the UK under retained EU law.

■ **Meat: Australia**

Emily Thornberry: [\[16822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to meat produced on farms that (a) store or deposit slurry and (b) position livestock feeders within 10 metres of inland freshwaters.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to meat produced on farms that permit cattle to cause poaching damage to grass and underlying soil within five metres of inland freshwaters.

Emily Thornberry: [\[16824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the tariff reductions the Government agreed on the 15 June 2021 for Australian agricultural exports to the UK will apply to intensive poultry and pig farms which exceed the maximum limits on emissions of dust, bioaerosols or ammonia permitted for farms in the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Government has agreed a deal with Australia that will further environmental and climate policy priorities and publicly affirms the shared commitment to environmental standards.

The UK will not compromise on high environmental protection and this agreement does not create new permissions for imports from Australia. All agri-food imports imported into the UK under existing or future free trade agreements must, as now, comply with the UK's import requirements.

■ **Overseas Trade: China**

Ms Nusrat Ghani: [\[15295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 13118 on Trade Agreements, whether it is her policy to increase bilateral trade with China.

Greg Hands:

Our approach to China remains clear-eyed and rooted in our values and our interests. We will pursue a positive economic relationship with China, including through mutually beneficial trade, whilst adhering to our values.

China is an authoritarian state with different values to the UK. The UK consistently acts on matters on which we do not agree, including human rights. In January 2021, the government announced measures to ensure UK businesses are not complicit in human rights violations against Uyghur people in Xinjiang.

We are committed to making the global trading system free and fair. We will call out unfair trading practices wherever they arise. Some market-distorting economic practices undermine the functioning of the global trading system and prevent free and fair trade. It is in everyone's interest, including China's, to see this system strengthened.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[14234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether clauses or chapters on animal welfare may be inserted into the Australia Trade Agreement.

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[14235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will take steps to ensure that animal welfare clauses or chapters are inserted into the Australia trade agreement.

Greg Hands:

Prime Ministers Johnson and Morrison secured an historic free trade agreement on 15 June at Number 10 Downing Street. The Government expects to publish an agreement document outlining what has been agreed for Agreement in Principle (AiP) in the coming days.

This agreement with Australia secures positive steps on animal welfare. The Government has secured a non-regression clause with Australia to ensure that neither country lowers current or future animal welfare protections. The Government has also secured commitments to cooperate together on animal welfare internationally.

The UK produces high quality, premium produce that is globally sought after, and maintaining high domestic standards is a red line in all the UK's trade negotiations, as the Government works to bring new export opportunities to British farmers.

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[16010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of a free trade deal with Australia on small to medium-sized farms in the North East.

Greg Hands:

The scoping assessment published in June 2020 assessed the potential impacts of a deal, in advance of negotiations, under various illustrative scenarios. This included a more detailed look at the impacts on the agri-food sectors. This assessment was not based on the actual deal, but on broad assumptions about what a trade agreement could look like.

Following the conclusion of negotiations, the Government will be updating the analysis and publishing a full impact assessment prior to implementation of the agreement.

The Australia-UK free trade agreement (FTA) will bring new export opportunities to British farmers and benefit the industry by removing tariffs whilst protecting UK agricultural sensitivities, upholding the UK's high food and animal welfare standards, and facilitating movement of people. The UK produces high quality, premium produce that is globally sought after, and all the new FTAs will create new export opportunities for British farming.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[16807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that the UK's (a) farming standards are upheld and (b) farmers are not undercut by imports of animal products produced with lower standards in Australia as part of the free trade agreement with that country.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has always been clear that this deal will not compromise the UK's high standards. Imports will still have to meet the same UK food safety and biosecurity import standards as they did before.

This deal will also not unfairly undercut UK farmers. The Government has agreed a ground-breaking non-regression clause on animal welfare, which means that neither country can lower their animal welfare standards to undercut the other. The Government has also agreed a general safeguard mechanism which will provide a safety net for industry if they face serious injury from increased imports as a direct consequence of the Free Trade Agreement.

Imran Ahmad Khan:[\[16994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of the UK-Australian Free Trade Agreement on the economy of (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire.

Imran Ahmad Khan:[\[16995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department plans to take to promote the potential merits of the UK-Australian Free Trade Agreement to businesses in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire.

Greg Hands:

The scoping assessment published in June 2020 assessed the potential impacts of a deal, before negotiations started, under two illustrative scenarios. It found the region of Yorkshire and the Humber benefited in all modelled scenarios.

More than 1,200 businesses in Yorkshire and the Humber exported more than £240 million worth of goods to Australia in 2020. As part of an Free Trade Agreement, manufacturers could benefit from the removal of a 5% tariff on metals exports, and broader tariff elimination could benefit the machinery and transport equipment industries in the region, whilst the removal of tariffs of up to 5% on food and drink could provide new opportunities for Yorkshire and the Humber's outstanding food and drink producers. Provisions on digital and services will also open up new opportunities for the service sector.

Further to this, the Department for International Trade is establishing a trade hub in Darlington as part of a new strategy to boost exports and bring the benefits of the government's global trade policy to the whole of the UK, including Yorkshire and the North East, providing exporters with a stronger feed into UK trade policy, to take better advantage of opportunities in fast-growing markets like the Indo-Pacific region.

Zarah Sultana:[\[17865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that the free trade deal with Australia will not result in lower (a) environmental, (b) animal welfare and (c) food standards in the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Government has always been clear that this deal will not compromise the UK's high standards.

Maintaining the UK's high environmental, animal welfare and food standards is a red line in trade negotiations. This agreement does not create new permissions for imports from Australia, and any agri-food products imported into the UK will – as now – have to comply with our high import requirements and standards.

■ USA: Trade Agreements**Emily Thornberry:**[\[15191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish each of the reports distributed by the UK's trade commissioner for North America to individual members of the US Senate and US House of Representatives on the potential benefits of a UK-US trade deal for their states and districts.

Emily Thornberry:[\[15192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which unit of government or external agency was responsible for producing the reports distributed to individual members of the US Senate and US House of Representatives on the potential benefits of a UK-US trade deal for their states and districts.

Emily Thornberry:

[15193]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what data sources were used to produce the reports distributed to individual members of the US Senate and US House of Representatives on the potential benefits of a UK-US trade deal for their states and districts.

Emily Thornberry:

[15194]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which Minister or official authorised the preparation and distribution of reports to individual members of the US Senate and US House of Representatives on the potential benefits of a UK-US trade deal for their states and districts.

Greg Hands:

The reports represent the current trade relationship between the UK and each of the 50 states, not the potential trade benefits of a UK-US free trade agreement. The reports were produced using data supplied by The Trade Partnership, an economic research firm in Washington, DC.

The 2020 state level reports were also produced from data supplied by The Trade Partnership, available on GOV.UK here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-usa-trade-and-investment-highlights> .

The UK-US 50 State and 435 Congressional District economic impact reports were authorised and commissioned by the US Prosperity Programme Board, which is made up of numerous officials. State export data comes from The Trade Partnership's CDxports database.

The Trade Partnership derives goods exports primarily from data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Moody's Analytics. The Trade Partnership derives services exports primarily from data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Moody's Analytics.

The 435 district-level reports, produced from the state level data, have not been previously published due to the disproportionate cost in staff time to format and upload them onto GOV.UK.

JUSTICE

■ Magistrates

Dr Julian Lewis:

[16778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2021 to Question 170517 on the reinstatement, after the enactment of forthcoming legislation, of retired magistrates between the ages of 70 and 75, whether (a) all such magistrates will be invited individually to indicate whether they wish to return to the Bench and (b) the transitional process for those magistrates to be reinstated will provide for (i) preference to be given to the most senior magistrates who are willing to travel to courts throughout

designated areas facing backlogs of cases, (ii) decisions on reinstatement to be taken at regional level and not at the level of individual courts to maximise (A) availability and (B) flexibility in the deployment of the most experienced reinstated magistrates and (iii) use to be made of the network of Justices' Training, Approvals, Authorisations and Appraisals Committees in managing the return and reallocation of magistrates who retired at age 70 but are about to become eligible for reinstatement.

Chris Philp:

When the new mandatory retirement age (MRA) comes into force, there will be a transitional provision to enable retired magistrates to apply to return to the bench, subject to business need. The process by which such applications are to be made and considered will be set out in due course.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Artificial Intelligence**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[14056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

Chris Philp:

The department does not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Machine Learning (ML) in the true definition across its services. The department has an Analytical Platform which spots trends and create links between data sets; however, this wouldn't fall under either category. A case study on the Analytical Platform can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/choose-tools-and-infrastructure-to-make-better-use-of-your-data#case-study---using-data-science-with-the-ministry-of-justice-analytical-platform>

With its analytical platform, the department has built a set of tools that provide the basis for the potential development of AI/ML tools, and alongside this, we are undertaking a project that builds on the Office for Artificial Intelligence guidance to develop practical tools and governance to support the ethical development of any future AI/ML project. The Government's Data Ethics Framework and 'Guide to Using AI in the Public Sector', alongside other guidance are available on GOV.UK, to support ethical and safe use of algorithms in the public sector.

The Department continues to review where artificial intelligence or machine learning would add value to undertaking its duties. In most circumstances we use software in place of machine learning or Artificial Intelligence.

■ **Remand in Custody**

Alex Cunningham:

[16102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to extend beyond the 28 June the provision enabling custody time limits to be extended to eight months.

Chris Philp:

In September 2020 the Ministry of Justice legislated to extend temporarily the maximum amount of time a defendant can be held in custody pre-trial – the custody time limit (CTL) – from six months to eight months due to the effect that Covid-19 was having on the courts. The legislation was intended to be temporary; it included a sunset clause to ensure that the measure was not in force for any longer than necessary, and this clause states that on 28 June 2021 CTLs will revert to six months. There is no plan to extend this date. Anyone remanded into custody after 28 June will be given a CTL of six months.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Abortion: Northern Ireland****Stephen Farry:**[\[13256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of anti-abortion protests outside clinics in Northern Ireland on the accessibility of abortion services to women requiring abortion care.

Mr Robin Walker:

We recognise that there are strongly held views on abortion, and that everyone has the right to express their views, including the right to peaceful protest. Equally, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is under a clear legal duty under section 9 of the NIEF Act to ensure that the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW report are implemented in respect of Northern Ireland. That includes Recommendation 86(g) - 'Protect women from harassment by anti-abortion protesters by investigating complaints and prosecuting and punishing perpetrators'.

We previously committed to keeping the matter of exclusion zones under review for 12 months following the making of the 2020 abortion regulations, and we will continue to keep the matter under close review as and when abortion services are commissioned.

There are a range of existing public order offences in Northern Ireland that can likely be relied on, depending on the individual circumstances of the incident.

■ Health: Disadvantaged**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**[\[16795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the commitment in the New Decade New Approach Agreement to tackle health inequalities and provide sustainable funding for investment in and reform of the health and social care system through the Elective Care Framework announced by the Northern Ireland Minister of Health.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government recognises the importance of ensuring proper provision of, and access to, health services right across the UK. That is why it is important we continue to see a functioning Executive delivering for all the people of Northern Ireland and tackling these crucial issues.

The Executive's focus over the past year has been on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic but as we now recover, the Executive must ensure that they Build Back Better to deliver the public services that the people of Northern Ireland deserve.

I welcome the plan to address waiting times in Northern Ireland and reform the health and social care system through the Elective Care Framework announced by the Executive's Health Minister and I look forward to engaging with him on it in the near future.

The UK Government is providing substantial funding to the Executive of £15.6bn in 2021/22 to enable it to deliver excellent public services. This is in addition to the £445m explicitly to support the transformation of public services from NDNA and Confidence and Supply. It is for the Executive to make the necessary decisions to ensure this funding is used effectively.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Artificial Intelligence**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[14202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment they have made of the potential (a) threats and (b) opportunities of artificial intelligence in respect of their Department's responsibilities.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department has made no assessment of artificial intelligence in respect of its responsibilities.

■ Sex and Relationship Education: Northern Ireland**Stephen Farry:**[\[13257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all children and young people in Northern Ireland are taught about all pregnancy options, including abortion as part of comprehensive relationships and sex education.

Mr Robin Walker:

We recognise that sexual and reproductive health education is an important component in ensuring women and girls are well informed of the choices available to them.

Following the restoration of devolution, the Minister for Education agreed to continue funding the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) for the 2020/21 FY and now from 2021/22, and further funding was made available to develop a Relationship and Sexual Education hub. This further funding will continue

to develop resources but also provide Teacher Professional Learning. My officials continue to work with the Department for Education to ensure appropriate implementation of recommendation 86(d) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW report) in Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[16936\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to WhatsApp communications dated 27 March 2020, published by Dominic Cummings on 16 June 2021, whether his assessment on that date was that the roll out of covid-19 testing was totally hopeless.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[16966\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to WhatsApp communications dated 27 April 2020, published by Dominic Cummings on 16 June 2021, whether he had (a) discussions and (b) WhatsApp communications with his Senior Adviser, Dominic Cummings, on 27 April 2020 on the adequacy of the supply of PPE during the covid-19 outbreak.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[16967\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to WhatsApp communications dated 27 April 2020, published by Dominic Cummings on 16 June 2021, whether the (a) Cabinet Office and (b) the Department for Health of Social Care held ministerial responsibility for the negotiation of PPE contracts on 27 April 2020.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[16968\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to WhatsApp communications dated 27 April 2020, published by Dominic Cummings on 16 June 2021, whether he held discussions with officials in his Department on 27 April 2020 on his confidence in the competency of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in managing his Department's response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Boris Johnson:

Throughout this pandemic, the whole of Government's priority has been to save lives, protect the NHS, and support people's jobs and livelihoods, right across the United Kingdom. We have stood side-by-side with the private sector, procuring enormous volumes of goods and expertise with extreme urgency – often, these were literally matters of life and death. This has delivered:

- The biggest vaccination programme we have ever undertaken.
- The largest diagnostic network in British history – with over 190 million tests conducted.
- A stockpile of over 32 billion items of PPE as a result of a phenomenal cross-government, international purchasing effort.

■ Mayors

Dan Jarvis: [R] [\[16851\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if he will meet with the M10 network of Metro Mayors.

Boris Johnson:

Details of my public engagements will be announced in the usual way. We want to empower local people to make decisions in areas that matter to them – on infrastructure, transport, housing – and for their future to be in their hands. Last month's Metro Mayor elections built on the biggest transfer of powers to local areas since the Second World War. And we will introduce a Levelling Up White Paper too – allowing every community across the country to have more local control and boosting livelihoods across the country as we recover from the pandemic.

TRANSPORT**■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Industrial Relations**

Paula Barker: [\[16987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the strength of industrial relations at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

Rachel Maclean:

The most recent assessment in relation to the strength of industrial relations was the ballot for industrial action which closed on 11 March 2021. Out of more than 6,000 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency staff, the number of individuals entitled to vote in the ballot was 3,106. Of these, 1,561 individuals voted, 1,114 voted in favour of industrial action, 442 people voted against and there were five spoiled voting papers.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment

Dan Jarvis: [\[16115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to increase the number of HGV drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

We are supporting the development of apprenticeships, including a standard to train lorry drivers. A revised standard will be available in August attracting £7,000 in apprenticeship levy funding.

The Department for Work and Pensions is developing a scheme to train jobseekers in HGV driving. The Flexible Support Fund is available to help the unemployed or those in receipt of Universal Credit renew their Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC).

The Department has provided a grant for the non-profit initiative Road to Logistics to train military service leavers, ex-offenders and the long term unemployed to move into jobs in the logistics sector, including lorry driving.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[16116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the impact of the introduction of IR35 on the number of HGV drivers; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The IR35 off-payroll working rules ensure that individuals working like employees but through their own limited company, or other intermediary, pay broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions as individuals who are directly employed.

Non-compliance with these rules was widespread and would have cost the Exchequer an estimated £1.3 billion per year by 2023/24 if not addressed.

The Government delayed the introduction of the rules to April 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. HMRC will be providing support to organisations to enable compliance with the changes to the off-payroll working rules.

■ Large Goods Vehicles

Dan Jarvis:

[\[16117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support he is providing to the haulage sector following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport's assessment is that the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) allows for the vast majority of UK haulage operations to and from the EU to continue as they did before the end of the transition period. In addition, the Department has worked closely with the sector to prepare for the end of the transition period on areas such as market access and border readiness. Ministers continue to meet regularly with the sector to discuss implementation of the agreement.

■ Railways: Costs

Sarah Olney:

[\[16913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made on the benefits of a clear pipeline of upcoming work for managing costs in the rail sector.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As is made clear in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, boosting supply chain productivity and line of sight over the future pipelines of work is imperative for an efficient, modern and innovative railway.

■ Railways: Immigration Controls**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[17814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking with the Home Secretary and (a) French and (b) EU authorities to help ensure progress towards delivering a frictionless border for international train travel in and out of the UK.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport is working with Home Office and Border Force to ensure the UK is border ready for the restart of international travel. This includes improving automation to meet the new biosecurity check requirements and deploying additional Border Force officers to reduce queue times as much as possible.

Ministers and officials meet regularly with their French counterparts to discuss matters concerning the UK-France border and have established a joint UK and France technical working group.

Government has also established a rhythm of regular engagement fora with industry across all modes of transport to support the effective flow of information and active dialogue across both short and longer term border priorities. This includes bi-annual, joint Border Force and DfT-led roundtables with senior officials and quarterly Border Facilitation groups.

■ Transport: Refrigeration**Geraint Davies:**[\[15995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of California's restrictions on non-road mobile machinery as a result of risk to life posed by that machinery.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is aware of a number of pollution reduction initiatives for non-road mobile machinery currently underway in California, but the Department has not undertaken an assessment of the policy implications.

Tougher pollutant emission limits and more comprehensive requirements for non-road mobile machinery engines were introduced in January 2019, and new engines were required to be compliant with these provisions from January 2021 in the UK.

TREASURY**■ Aviation: Taxation****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[16049\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to publish a response to the consultation on aviation tax reform.

Kemi Badenoch:

The consultation on aviation tax reform closed on 15 June. We are currently reviewing responses to the consultation and will update on timing in due course.

■ Building Safety Fund**Lucy Powell:**[\[16121\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 12143, for what reason the additional £3.5 billion of funding to remediate unsafe cladding from high rise residential buildings that will be made available from the current financial year was not included in the budget on 3 March 2021.

Steve Barclay:

On 10 February 2021, MHCLG announced £3.5bn additional funding for cladding remediation, alongside a wider package of building safety measures. MHCLG will announce further details on the availability of this funding in due course.

The Treasury sets departmental budgets at Spending Reviews.

■ Business: Carbon Emissions**Matthew Pennycook:**[\[16175\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of (a) insurers in the Lloyd's of London market and (b) other insurers on aligning their business objectives with the UK's net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target in the Climate Change Act 2008.

Matthew Pennycook:[\[16176\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of (a) insurers in the Lloyd's of London market and (b) other insurers on insuring fossil fuel projects in the UK and overseas that do not support the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Matthew Pennycook:[\[16177\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of financial services companies on reducing global greenhouse gas emissions from projects and companies financed and underwritten by those companies in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

John Glen:

Input from stakeholders is a valuable part of the policy making process, ensuring government and the private sector can work together to effectively address challenges such as net zero and driving economic growth across the UK. HMT is keen to engage with industry on the Chancellor's vision for the future of financial services, of which green finance is a key pillar. The Chancellor holds regular discussions with industry to discuss this. For example, recently the Prime Minister alongside the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England hosted a virtual

roundtable with financial services leaders in advance of the Chancellor's annual Mansion House speech.

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[16001]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide additional financial support to businesses affected by the postponement of the easing of covid-19 restrictions planned for 21 June 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK.

The Government put in place an economic package of support totalling £352 billion through the furlough and self-employed income support schemes, support for businesses through grants and loans, business rates and VAT relief.

At Budget the Government deliberately went long and erred on the side of generosity – specifically to accommodate any short delay to the roadmap. Most of the Government's Covid support schemes do not end until September or after, in order to provide continuity and certainty for businesses and families.

The Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS) announced at Budget 2021 ensures lenders continue to have the confidence to lend, ensuring viable businesses, including small businesses, continue to have access to Government-backed finance needed throughout 2021. The scheme launched on 6 April 2021, following the closure of the emergency schemes to new loan applications on 31 March 2021, and will run until 31 December 2021. The scheme operates UK-wide, providing an 80% guarantee to lenders for term loans, overdrafts, and invoice and asset finance.

At Budget, it was also announced that local authorities in England will receive a top-up worth a total of £425m to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund. This, combined with the £1.6 billion previously allocated, means local authorities will have received over £2bn of discretionary grant funding to support businesses which are not eligible for Restart Grants but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to public health restrictions. Nearly half of the £2bn is still with local authorities and yet to be allocated.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was introduced to help employers whose operations have been severely affected by coronavirus to retain their employees and protect the UK economy. All businesses across the UK can access the scheme, with employees receiving 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. At Budget the government extended the CJRS until the end of September 2021, to support businesses and employees through the next stage of the pandemic. The economy now is in a stronger position than it was last autumn, when businesses also contributed up to 20 per cent of wage costs.

In line with the extension to the CJRS, the government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth grant. This provides certainty to business as the economy reopens and means the SEISS will continue to be one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

As restrictions have been lifted, it is right that we ask employers to contribute more to strike the balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to provide support and protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work.

■ Companies: Coronavirus

Stephen Farry:

[15449]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what measures are in place to ensure debt forbearance for companies that received loans under the (a) Bounce Back Loan scheme and (b) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme and who will likely encounter continued financial difficulties as a result of ongoing covid-19 restrictions.

John Glen:

The Government has already taken action to give businesses the flexibility and space they need to repay their loans. Under the Bounce Back loan scheme no repayments are due from the borrower for the first 12 months of the loan, and the Government covers the first 12 months of interest payments charged to the business by the lender.

In order to give businesses further support in making their repayments, the Government announced "Pay as You Grow" (PAYG) options. PAYG will give businesses the option to repay their Bounce Back loan over ten years. This will reduce their average monthly repayments on the loan by almost half. Businesses will also have the option to move temporarily to interest-only payments for periods of up to six months (an option which they can use up to three times). They can also pause their repayments entirely for up to six months – and given the continued challenges businesses are facing, the Government opted to enable borrowers to make use of this option from the first repayment, which means that businesses can choose to make no payments on their loans until 18 months after they originally took them out. If borrowers want to take advantage of this option, they should notify their lender when they are contacted about their repayments.

Furthermore, the Government have amended the CBILS rules to allow lenders to extend loan terms from six to a maximum of ten years where the borrower is in difficulty and where the lender judges that an extension would help their situation. It should be clear that CBILS term extensions will be offered at the discretion of lenders, unlike the "Pay As You Grow" options for Bounce Back loans. Any business concerned about their ability to repay their finance should discuss this with their lender in the first instance.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Neale Hanvey:** [\[16233\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total value is of the Barnett consequentialia made available to the Scottish Government arising from UK Government expenditure for the (a) tourism sector and (b) travel agencies sector through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme since the start of the covid-19 outbreak..

Neale Hanvey: [\[16234\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total value is of the Barnett consequentialia made available to the Scottish Government arising from UK Government expenditure for the provision of support to the (a) tourism and (b) travel agencies sector in (i) grants, (ii) loans and (iii) tax breaks to assist in the recovery of those sectors from the covid-19 outbreak since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

As outlined in the Statement of Funding Policy, the Barnett formula determines changes to each devolved administration's funding with reference to changes in DEL funding for UK Government departments. The Barnett formula is not typically applied on a sector level and does not apply to UK-wide schemes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

In total, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Government has benefitted from £14.5 billion of additional funding through the Barnett formula. It is for the Scottish Government to decide how to use this funding.

A full breakdown of the devolved administrations' block grant funding will be published shortly in this year's iteration of Block Grant Transparency.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[16984\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the increase of employers' contributions to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme from 1 July 2021 on businesses that remain closed due to covid-19 restrictions.

Jesse Norman:

From 1 July 2021, employers will be asked to make a small contribution of ten per cent of wages for hours not worked, as announced at Spring Budget when the scheme was extended to the end of September.

This is the same approach that the Government introduced last summer, where comparable restrictions were in place. It is right to continue with the existing timetable to reintroduce employer contributions, in order to strike the right balance between supporting the economy as it opens up and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work as demand returns. The labour market is also in a stronger position, with 5.5 million fewer people on furlough than in April 2020, and online job vacancy levels in mid-June about 27 per cent above February 2020 levels.

At March Budget 2021, the Government deliberately went long and erred on the side of generosity; specifically to accommodate short delays to the roadmap, such as this.

Most of the Government's schemes do not end until September or after, in order to provide continuity and certainty for businesses and families.

Businesses that have legally remained closed or effectively cannot operate can continue to benefit from the Government's £2 billion of discretionary grant funding for local authorities in England, a UK-wide recovery loan scheme, business rates relief, enhanced Time to Pay for taxes, and support for paying deferred VAT. These businesses will also have recently benefitted from Restart Grants of up to £18,000 and the £25 billion grant support that has been made available throughout the pandemic.

■ **Cryptocurrencies: Registration**

Mr Steve Baker:

[16090]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether all firms that have applied for crypto anti-money laundering authorisation with the Financial Conduct Authority will have their applications processed by the deadline of 9 July 2021.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) announced on 3 June that the Temporary Registration Regime for cryptoasset firms would be extended from 9 July 2021 to 31 March 2022. Extending the regime will allow firms which are currently part of the regime to continue trading whilst their applications for anti-money laundering supervision are being assessed. The FCA has increased considerably the resources allocated to assessing applications, with a view to processing the remaining applications by the new deadline.

■ **Debts Written Off: Coronavirus**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[16058]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a Jubilee Fund to provide grants to pay off and cancel unavoidable debt accrued by the poorest households during the covid-19 lockdown period.

John Glen:

The Government has put in place an unprecedented package of support to help people during the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting livelihoods with the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and temporary welfare measures.

The Government has also worked with mortgage lenders, credit providers and the Financial Conduct Authority to help people manage their finances with payment holidays, and has taken unprecedented action to support renters, ensuring that no-one has been forced from their home during lockdown.

However, the Government recognises that the full impact of COVID19 on people's personal finances is still unfolding and that some are struggling at this challenging time. To help people in problem debt get their finances back on track, the

Government has agreed to maintain record levels of debt advice funding for the Money and Pension Service in 2021-22, bringing the budget for free debt advice in England to £94.6 million. This is more than a 70% increase since 2019-20 and reflects the Government's commitment to ensure that appropriate support is available for people in problem debt; enabling an additional 1 million people in England to get free-to-client debt advice.

In addition to this, the Breathing Space scheme has now been launched in England and Wales. The scheme will offer people in problem debt a pause of up to 60 days on most enforcement action, interest, fees and charges, and will encourage them to seek professional debt advice.

The Government regularly engages with a wide range of stakeholders to assess the merits of new policy proposals and ideas. A key consideration for the Government is that it is keen to ensure it is fair to people who pay their bills on time, whilst taking a supportive but proportionate approach to those who are not able to. The Government believes that a Jubilee fund to provide grants to write-off debts accrued as a result of COVID-19 would not be a proportionate solution that delivers this fairness.

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Stephen Farry:

[15448]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of issuing long-term covid-19 bonds to finance a sustained economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

Since the onset of COVID-19, the Government has announced an extensive package of measures in order to provide the critical support needed by individuals, families, and businesses facing disruption caused by the pandemic. This has significantly increased the Government's financing requirement in the near term and, as previously announced by the Chancellor, this additional financing will be fully funded via additional borrowing through the Government's normal debt management operations.

Our core gilt financing programme is the most stable and cost-effective way of raising finance to fund the day-to-day activities of the Government. This includes the significant funding increase required specifically to address the period of economic disruption arising from COVID-19 and the Government's policy response. The gilt market is deep and liquid, with a good track record in responding smoothly to increases in gilt supply.

At present, the UK Government does not have any plans to introduce long term COVID-19 bonds to help fund the response to the pandemic. The Government remains open to the introduction of new debt instruments but would need to be satisfied that any new instrument would meet value-for-money criteria, enjoy strong and sustained demand in the long term, and be consistent with wider fiscal objectives. The Government recently announced its intention to issue a first

sovereign Green Bond in 2021, for example. We keep the introduction of new debt financing instruments under regular review.

The UK already has comfortably the longest average duration to maturity in its debt stock across the G7, at around 15 years. This compares to around 8 years for our closest G7 peer (France) and helps to reduce refinancing risk in the UK. The conventional and index-linked yield curves stretch out to 2071 and 2068, respectively. When setting gilt issuance plans – including on the average duration of issuance – for the year ahead in the spring, HM Treasury and the Debt Management Office (DMO) seek to minimise, over the long term, the costs of meeting the Government's financing needs, taking into account risk.

■ Education: Finance

Peter Kyle:

[\[16168\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the relationship between investment in education and long-term financial returns to the public purse.

Steve Barclay:

The Chancellor regularly considers a range of evidence when taking decisions, including considerations on the long-term returns to the taxpayer from investment in education.

■ Equitable Life Assurance Society

Mr John Baron:

[\[16027\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had (a) with Cabinet colleagues and (b) his officials on compensation and support for people affected by the Equitable Life scandal.

John Glen:

The Equitable Life Payment Scheme closed to claims in 2015 and there are no plans to reopen the Payment Scheme or review the £1.5 billion funding allocation previously made to it. Further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after closure is available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme.

Henry Smith:

[\[16065\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on compensation and support for those affected by the Equitable Life scandal.

John Glen:

The Equitable Life Payment Scheme closed to claims in 2015 and there are no plans to reopen the Payment Scheme or review the £1.5 billion funding allocation previously made to it. Further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after

closure is available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme.

■ **Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**

Christine Jardine:

[\[16934\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had (a) with Cabinet colleagues and (b) within his Department on compensation and support for those affected by the Equitable Life scandal.

John Glen:

I refer the Honourable Member for Edinburgh West to the answer I gave on the 19 April 2021 to PQ UIN 179543.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[16017\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the extension of covid-19 restrictions beyond 21 June 2021, what steps the Government is taking to support the hospitality sector; if he will take steps to reduce the tax burden on businesses affected by that extension; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of raising VAT from 5 per cent in September 2021 on the events and hospitality sectors.

Jesse Norman:

At Budget, the Chancellor was aware of the potential for short delays in the roadmap and announced a generous extension to existing economic support. In order to provide continuity for businesses, key measures including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, VAT cut extension, Business Rates Holiday, and Recovery Loan scheme do not end until September or after.

The extension to the temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) for the tourism and hospitality sector means that the relief will now end on 30 September 2021. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5 per cent will be introduced for these goods and services to help businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate. The new rate will end on 31 March 2022.

This relief has cost over £7 billion and has helped support the cash flow and viability of 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs. While the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to extend the reduced rate of VAT further.

■ **Niramax**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[16032\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 11491 on Niramax, which piece of legislation creates this statutory duty.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[16033\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 11491 on Niramax, to set out these cases (a) by region and (b) by year.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[16034\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 11491 on Niramax, how many press releases and press comments HMRC have made on landfill tax fraud in the last five years.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC do not collate data on all the comments/press releases issued so they are unable to provide an accurate answer to the question asked within the timeframe.

The statutory duty of confidentiality referred to in the answer of 15 June 2021 relates to the legislation as set out at Section 18 of the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act of 2005.

The request to break down the number of interventions by region and year is not possible to fulfil within the timescale allowed as HMRC do not record the data in that format. HMRC can give details of the number of risks closed as follows: 2018, 250 risks closed; 2019, 235 risks closed; 2020, 293 risks closed; and 2021, 238 risks closed. Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[16982\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timetable is for opening applications for the business rates relief fund announced on 25 March 2021.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[16983\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made in establishing the business rates relief fund announced on 25 March 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is preparing guidance to support local authorities ahead of the rollout of the £1.5 billion business rates relief fund. The final guidance, its specifics and level of prescription, will reflect considerations including the existing framework of Government support, information held by local authorities and their capacity to administer the scheme.

This discretionary relief pot will support businesses on the basis of their actual economic exposure to COVID-19 rather than the pandemic's hypothetical impact on property rental values. The alternative of prolonged litigation and appeals through the Material Change of Circumstance provision could have taken years. The Government will support local authorities to enable ratepayers to apply for relief awards as soon as possible this year, once the legislation relating to Material Change of

Circumstance provisions has passed, and local authorities have set up local relief schemes.

■ Non-domestic Rates and VAT

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[16189]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward proposals to extend (a) business rates relief and (b) the reduced 5 per cent rate of VAT.

Jesse Norman:

Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses have paid no business rates for 15 months on their eligible properties. From 1 July, eligible premises will continue to benefit from a 66% capped relief as restrictions ease, until the end of March 2022. This means that over 90% of eligible businesses will receive the equivalent of a 75% reduction in their business rates bill across the financial year.

Budget 2021 also announced the extension of the temporary reduced rate of VAT (5%) for the tourism and hospitality sector. The relief will now end on 30 September 2021. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5% will be introduced for these goods and services to help businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate. The new rate will end on 31 March 2022.

This relief has cost over £7 billion and has helped support the cash flow and viability of 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs. While the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to extend the reduced rate of VAT further.

■ Raw Materials: Overseas Trade

Mr Richard Holden:

[14230]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much unfinished product made with (a) raw natural fibres such as wool and cotton and (b) man made fibres such as polyester were (i) imported to and (ii) exported from the UK in each of the last 30 years.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection and publication of data on imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC release this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics (OTS), which is available via their dedicated website (www.uktradeinfo.com). From this website, it is possible to build data tables based upon bespoke search criteria.

HMRC use an 8-digit coding system to classify UK imports and exports which is used for UK Customs Tariff and trade statistics purposes. This coding system is based upon the internationally recognised Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) developed by the World Customs Organization:

<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/nomenclature/overview/what-is-the-harmonized-system.aspx>.

HMRC are unable to provide the requested trade data as the HS system does not classify goods as described in this question.

■ Revenue and Customs: Contracts

Navendu Mishra:

[\[16974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons it is not a requirement to monitor contracts that have ended due to a supplier termination event.

Kemi Badenoch:

Due to the high number of contracts awarded by HMRC and the rarity of supplier termination events, it would be a disproportionate requirement to monitor these. HMRC acts in accordance to the Government Commercial Operating Standards, and there is no necessity to monitor supplier termination events.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Zarah Sultana:

[\[16962\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support recipients of grants from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme who are being refused mortgages as a result of financial insecurity following the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

Up to 9 May, £24.5bn has been paid in Self Employed Income Support Scheme grants in total. Across the four schemes 2.8m individuals have received a grant and 8.8m total grants have been claimed.

Decisions concerning the pricing and availability of loans, including application requirements, remain commercial decisions for lenders and the Government does not seek to intervene. For individuals applying for new credit, it remains important that lenders are able to carry out proper checks to ensure that they are not lending in an unaffordable way, especially if, for example, a borrower's income had not yet returned to the levels it was at pre Covid-19. Where an individual has been refused a mortgage with one provider, we would also urge them to shop around, recognising lenders do not all take the same approach to assessing affordability.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Carers

Zarah Sultana:

[\[16963\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 19 May 2020 to Question 45025 on Self-Employment Income Support Scheme: Carers, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the eligibility criteria for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme so that trading income does not have to exceed the amount of (a) other income and (b) taxable benefits including carer's allowance.

Jesse Norman:

The design of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme including the requirement that trading profits must be at least equal to non-trading income, means

it is targeted at those who are most dependent on their self-employment income. That continues to be the case.

HMRC data shows that the majority of people with positive profits who do not meet the 50 per cent self-employment income test had income from employment, which means they potentially have access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, as well as other elements of the very substantial package of support made available by the Government

■ Small Businesses

Feryal Clark:

[\[15429\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he plans to make available to small businesses to adopt the new cashback provisions outlined in the Financial Services Act 2021.

John Glen:

As part of the Financial Services Act 2021 the Government made legislative changes to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase by shops and other businesses. The Government's view is that cashback without a purchase has the potential to be a valuable facility to cash users, and to play an important role in the UK's cash infrastructure.

The Government's legislative change to enable cashback without a purchase will take effect this month of June 2021. Last month, UK Finance announced the formation of a new Access to Cash Action Group, and confirmed that the banking and finance industry is already working collaboratively with retailers to make a success of this new opportunity.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Caroline Nokes:

[\[15232\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional funding he plans to make available to small businesses impacted by the further four weeks of covid-19 restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK.

The Government put in place an economic package of support totalling £352 billion through the furlough and self-employed income support schemes, support for businesses through grants and loans, business rates and VAT relief.

At Budget the Government deliberately went long and erred on the side of generosity – specifically to accommodate any short delay to the roadmap. Most of the Government's Covid support schemes do not end until September or after, in order to provide continuity and certainty for businesses and families.

The Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS) announced at Budget 2021 ensures lenders continue to have the confidence to lend, ensuring viable businesses, including small

businesses, continue to have access to Government-backed finance needed throughout 2021. The scheme launched on 6 April 2021, following the closure of the emergency schemes to new loan applications on 31 March 2021, and will run until 31 December 2021. The scheme operates UK-wide, providing an 80% guarantee to lenders for term loans, overdrafts, and invoice and asset finance.

At Budget, it was also announced that local authorities in England will receive a top-up worth a total of £425m to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund. This, combined with the £1.6 billion previously allocated, means local authorities will have received over £2bn of discretionary grant funding to support businesses which are not eligible for Restart Grants but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to public health restrictions. Nearly half of the £2bn is still with local authorities and yet to be allocated.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was introduced to help employers whose operations have been severely affected by coronavirus to retain their employees and protect the UK economy. All businesses across the UK can access the scheme, with employees receiving 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. At Budget the government extended the CJRS until the end of September 2021, to support businesses and employees through the next stage of the pandemic. The economy now is in a stronger position than it was last autumn, when businesses also contributed up to 20 per cent of wage costs.

In line with the extension to the CJRS, the government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth grant. This provides certainty to business as the economy reopens and means the SEISS will continue to be one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

As restrictions have been lifted, it is right that we ask employers to contribute more to strike the balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to provide support and protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax: Fraud

Mr Kevan Jones:

[16031]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 77, what assessment he has made of whether the comments made by the Fraud Investigation Service director at HMRC in response to enforcement action in the North East in September 2015 were in breach of HMRC's statutory duty of taxpayer confidentiality; and who was responsible for authorising the publication of those comments.

Jesse Norman:

The comments made by the Fraud Investigation Service director in HMRC in response to enforcement action in the North East in September 2015 were not in breach of HMRC's statutory duty of confidentiality. It is right and proper that HMRC

raise public awareness of suspected fraud on this scale and of the action they are taking in response to tackle it. None of the comments made related to the details of an individual taxpayer.

■ **Tourism: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Neale Hanvey:

[16232]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total value is of Government support made available to businesses in the (a) tourism sector and (b) travel agencies sector through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs publish statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) regularly.

The statistics published in August 2020 can be found on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-august-2020>.

These statistics report that employers classified under Travel agency and tour operator activities (Standard Industrial Classification 2007, group 79.1) claimed £214 million for staff on furlough between the start of the scheme and 31 July 2020.

Further statistics published on 3 June 2021 report that employers in the Travel agency and tour operator activities sector claimed £232 million from 1 November 2020 to 30 April 2021. These figures can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-3-june-2021>.

There are no figures available for the value of CJRS claims for Travel agency and tour operator activities from 1 August 2020 to 31 October 2020, nor for employers in sectors connected with tourism.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[15393]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what tailored long-term support he will make available to (a) airlines and (b) the travel industry in response to increased covid-19 transmission and changing guidelines for international travel.

Kemi Badenoch:

The aviation and aerospace sectors are being supported with over £11 billion made available through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and grants for research and development.

In England, the wider travel and tourism sectors can benefit from the £5 billion package of grant support announced at Budget. This includes Restart Grants worth up to £6,000 if classified as non-essential retail or up to £18,000 if classified as a leisure or accommodation business. This package of support also includes the £425

million top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant which has already provided Local Authorities (LAs) with £1.6 billion. This funding is at the LAs discretion and is intended to support businesses which are not eligible for Restart Grants, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business.

The Government continues to review all the economic support schemes, including grant support, as the public health response evolves.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[16022\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the level of need for Government support during summer 2021 for businesses in the travel agency industry that are affected by covid-19 travel restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government appreciates the significant disruption the pandemic has had on travel agents. Companies facing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including the COVID loans schemes and extended furlough.

In England, travel agents can benefit from the £5 billion package of grant support announced at Budget. This includes Restart Grants worth up to £6,000 if classified as non-essential retail or up to £18,000 if classified as a leisure or accommodation business. This package of support also includes the £425 million top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant which has already provided Local Authorities (LAs) with £1.6 billion. This funding is at the LAs discretion and is intended to support businesses which are not eligible for Restart Grants, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business.

The Government continues to review all the economic support schemes, including grant support, as the public health response evolves.

■ Treasury: Written Questions

Rachael Maskell:

[\[16897\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how long on average his Department has taken to respond to (a) named day and (b) ordinary day written parliamentary questions tabled by (i) Labour hon. Members and (ii) hon. Members of other political parties in the last 12 months.

Kemi Badenoch:

The information is not available in the form requested.

Between 1 June 2020 and 15 June 2021, Treasury Ministers answered 4640 of the 4655 written questions (99.6%) tabled to the Department within the parliamentary deadline.

WALES**■ Immigration: EU Nationals****Ruth Jones:**[\[16217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the deadline for EU citizens living in Wales to register for the EU Settlement Scheme.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with the Home Secretary on a wide range of subjects including the EU settlement scheme (EUSS).

In addition, my officials are in regular contact with colleagues in the Home Office about how they can best support their efforts.

UK Government has worked extensively to promote awareness of the EUSS. The Home Office has already spent a total of £4.6 million on marketing campaigns to encourage those EU citizens and their family members who have not yet applied to do so. The Home Office recently launched a new £1.5 million wave of UK-wide advertising to ensure EU citizens and their family members are aware of the deadline and know they need to apply.

As of May 2021, the Home Office received 92,700 applications through the EU Settlement Scheme from EEA citizens living in Wales.

The UK Government is committed to making sure everybody eligible for the EUSS can apply, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. Since April 2019, £17 million has been awarded by the UK Government in grant funding to a network of 72 organisations, who provide a wide range of invaluable support across the UK, ensuring those most at-risk continue to get the help they need.

The UK Government has two grant funded organisations; Tros Gynnal Plant and Newport Mind who operate and provide a wide range of support services to vulnerable and hard to reach EU citizens across Wales.

The UK Government has committed a further £4.5 million of grant funding for the period 1 April to 30 September this year to fund the current network of 72 organisations to continue to provide a range of support across the UK well beyond the 30 June deadline.

■ Wales Office: Freedom of Information**Nia Griffith:**[\[16054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, 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.

David T C Davies:

Where it is appropriate, the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has approached the Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on Freedom of Information requests.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Chemicals: Regulation****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[15363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 1 June 2021 to Question 6432 on Chemicals: Regulation, what assessment she has made of the (a) capacity and (b) level of expertise to regulate chemical safety of the Chemical Regulation Division of the Health and Safety Executive.

Mims Davies:

Regular discussions on issues such as the capacity and levels of expertise across all the regulatory regimes for which the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are responsible are held with both the Chair and Chief Executive of HSE. These discussions include the regulation of chemicals undertaken by the Chemicals Regulation Division, particularly for the first year of operating under the new arrangements, following exit from the EU.

These discussions identified the need for additional staff and expertise for 1 January 2021, in which recruitment began in July 2020, with further recruitment planned for 2021/22 work year and beyond. Such matters are kept under regular review as HSE are working towards full operating capability over the next three years.

■ **Children: Maintenance****Rachael Maskell:**[\[17774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints about child maintenance cases have been received by the Independent Case Examiner in each year since 2010.

Guy Opperman:

Information about the number of complaints received by the Unit is routinely included in the Independent Case Examiner's Annual Report, which is published on gov.uk. The information requested is summarised in the table below.

Please note that the Independent Case Examiner can only review complaints which have received a final response from DWP, as such not all the complaints that are received are accepted for examination.

YEAR	CSA & CMS COMPLAINTS RECEIVED
2010/11	2241
2011/12	1670
2012/13	1457
2013/14	1354
2014/15	1169
2015/16	936
2016/17	869
2017/18	896
2018/19	1255
2019/20	1330
2020/21	1465

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Dudley**

Marco Longhi:

[15420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department's new temporary site on High Street Dudley, will be used to support (a) new and (b) existing customers; and whether that site will be made a permanent location.

Mims Davies:

The Department has seen an increase in demand for its services and, as a result, is rapidly expanding the space available, on a temporary basis. These offices will supplement the existing Jobcentre network and will serve both existing and new customers.

As the economy recovers and/or social distancing requirements are eased, the Department will look to close the temporary sites, ensuring there is balance in providing essential services for customers with value for money for taxpayers. If, however, any of the new sites offer better, more suitable accommodation than our existing offices the Department may look to retain them.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Vacancies**

David Linden:

[16939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many civil service jobs her Department and its agencies had located in Scotland in March 2015.

Guy Opperman:

As at 31st March 2015, DWP had 10,101 employees based in Scotland.

■ Discretionary Housing Payments

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[16938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the Government plans to change the level of Discretionary Housing Payment.

Will Quince:

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding levels are determined during fiscal events.

For 2021-22 the Government has made available £140m in DHP funding for local authorities in England and Wales to distribute to help support vulnerable people with housing costs. This level of funding reflects the increase to Local Housing Allowance rates. There are no plans to change the level of DHP funding.

We have been closely monitoring DHP spend and we will continue to do this throughout 2021/22.

■ Food Banks

Chris Stephens:

[\[16143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she expects to publish her Department's review of the drivers of food bank demand.

Will Quince:

The Department reallocated resources to prioritise work to help the COVID-19 effort. This caused delays to some work, including this literature review. The review summarises publicly available information and does not contain any new research carried out by the Department.

The Department has recently published new data from the Family Resources Survey on household food security, giving us a better understanding of who is most at risk. This underlines how seriously we take the issue of food insecurity.

■ Independent Case Examiner

Rachael Maskell:

[\[17773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time taken was between (a) receipt of a complaint by the Independent Case Examiner and (b) allocating that complaint to a case worker for investigation in each year since 2010.

Guy Opperman:

When the Independent Case Examiner's (ICE) Office accept a complaint for investigation, they will initially try to broker a solution between the complainant and the relevant department or supplier, without having to request evidence to inform an investigation – this is known as “resolution”. If it's not possible to resolve the

complaint, the evidence will be requested and the case will await allocation to an Investigation Case Manager (ICM).

The cases that reach the ICE are the most complex and usually require investigation. Complainants are kept updated about the timings involved with their case.

Complete information about the average allocation timescales is only available for the last two reporting years as the reports are generated from electronic case specific records which are only retained for 26 months following case closure.

	2019/20	2020/21
Average time taken from complaint acceptance to allocation to an Investigation Case Manager (in all ICE cases).	59.9 weeks	63.8 weeks

■ Jobcentres: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[16139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what advice is being given to staff and customers attending in person at jobcentres in areas where guidance on enhanced covid-19 measures has been issued.

Mims Davies:

Throughout the pandemic, Jobcentres remained open for anyone who needed face-to-face support. DWP takes the safety of colleagues and customers very seriously and all of our offices are COVID secure and we have extensive measures in place to protect staff and customers including social distancing and enhanced cleaning regimes.

Staff and customers are instructed that they should not to come into our offices if they have covid or covid symptoms and that they should stay at home and book a test.

In addition, colleagues across the country are advised to undertake twice weekly lateral flow testing and to take up the offer of surge testing and vaccinations when these are made available.

We continue to follow all Government guidance in relation to measures in place in our sites.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[16809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the 8.6 per cent claimant rate in Kingston upon Hull North constituency compared with the national

average claimant rate of 6 per cent, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the Kickstart scheme on employment levels in (a) Kingston upon Hull North constituency, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) England.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions will be monitoring and evaluating the Kickstart scheme throughout its implementation, and will continue to evaluate the longer term outcomes for Kickstart participants after they have completed their six-month job placements. This will include an examination of the impact on employment.

For the most recent information on Kickstart job starts by location I refer the Honourable Member to PQ [11544](#).

■ **Local Housing Allowance**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[16937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the Government has frozen Local Housing Allowance.

Will Quince:

We significantly increased housing support for private renters last year, raising Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to the 30th percentile of local rents in April 2020. This investment of nearly £1billion provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support last year than they would otherwise have received. We have maintained LHA rates at the same cash level for 2021/22, rather than reverting back to previous rates.

For those who require additional support with housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in DHP funding. We have allocated a further £140 million for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2021/22 in England and Wales.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John McNally:

[\[14168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to ensure that her Department responds to the letter dated 11 May 2021 to the Minister for Disabled People regarding a constituent of the hon. Member for Falkirk, ref NY043775B, before that constituent's personal independence payment tribunal deadline of 2 July 2021.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on behalf of the Minister for Disabled People on 18 June.

■ National Insurance Contributions

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[15395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June to Question 1397 on National Insurance Contributions, if he will publish for each cell in each table a further breakdown of the data by five year age bands.

Guy Opperman:

The tables below show a breakdown by five-year age bands of how qualifying years were built up for the tax years 2011/12 and 2018/19.

The line 'No Full Qualifying Year' refers to those individuals who may have had some contributions or credits recorded, but did not build a qualifying year in the respective years.

The line 'NI Contributions and Credits' indicates where a qualifying year includes some periods of contributions and some of credits within the year.

Please note - for 2011/12, the low numbers of qualifying years for women aged 60-64 is because the staged introduction of State Pension ages above 60 was just beginning at that time.

2011/12

		CONTRIBUTIONS CONTRIBUTIONS NI CREDITS			NO FULL QUALIFYING YEAR
GENDER & AGE	AND NI	ONLY	ONLY	TOTAL	
Male 15-19	21,100	315,800	24,900	361,800	595,000
Male 20-24	72,200	1,326,200	91,300	1,489,700	563,500
Male 25-29	55,100	1,686,900	116,400	1,858,400	317,200
Male 30-34	46,900	1,668,300	140,100	1,855,300	203,200
Male 35-39	44,500	1,701,500	181,300	1,927,300	160,800
Male 40-44	42,000	1,828,600	229,500	2,100,100	158,100
Male 45-49	37,900	1,831,900	251,300	2,121,100	135,200
Male 50-54	33,300	1,548,300	243,300	1,824,900	113,700
Male 55-59	24,700	1,214,300	259,200	1,498,200	113,900
Male 60-64	68,000	729,400	815,300	1,612,700	186,000
Female 15-19	20,400	236,300	56,500	313,200	566,200
Female 20-24	118,600	1,161,900	286,200	1,566,700	453,900
Female 25-29	151,000	1,459,900	400,900	2,011,800	172,500

		CONTRIBUTIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS	NI CREDITS		No FULL QUALIFYING YEAR
GENDER & AGE	AND NI	ONLY	ONLY	TOTAL		
Female 30-34	150,000	1,340,000	439,400	1,929,400		105,100
Female 35-39	143,500	1,351,500	485,700	1,980,700		93,700
Female 40-44	116,400	1,570,000	455,200	2,141,600		117,700
Female 45-49	72,100	1,637,300	342,900	2,052,300		146,800
Female 50-54	40,800	1,374,000	279,300	1,694,100		143,900
Female 55-59	27,300	1,025,900	301,300	1,354,500		144,100
Female 60-64	100	300	100	500		83,600
Total	1,285,900	25,008,300	5,400,100	31,694,300		4,574,100

2018/19

		CONTRIBUTIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS	NI CREDITS		No FULL QUALIFYING YEAR
GENDER & AGE	AND NI	ONLY	ONLY	TOTAL		
Male 15-19	300	87,200	24,500	112,000		516,900
Male 20-24	32,100	1,317,300	84,000	1,433,400		446,900
Male 25-29	29,800	1,834,700	105,100	1,969,600		250,600
Male 30-34	29,300	1,841,600	129,400	2,000,300		182,700
Male 35-39	29,800	1,740,500	151,000	1,921,300		142,600
Male 40-44	24,500	1,578,500	167,200	1,770,200		112,600
Male 45-49	23,200	1,715,000	203,100	1,941,300		112,400
Male 50-54	16,900	1,657,700	227,200	1,901,800		110,100
Male 55-59	13,600	1,349,900	228,900	1,592,400		110,600
Male 60-64	10,800	741,000	198,500	950,300		183,500
Female 15-19	700	26,400	45,300	72,400		486,900
Female 20-24	76,500	1,211,100	196,100	1,483,700		413,100

		CONTRIBUTIONS		NI CREDITS	No Full Qualifying Year
GENDER & AGE	AND NI	ONLY	ONLY	TOTAL	
Female 25-29	133,000	1,632,000	322,500	2,087,500	178,500
Female 30-34	144,900	1,590,400	413,700	2,149,000	140,000
Female 35-39	115,500	1,503,700	436,000	2,055,200	106,700
Female 40-44	81,700	1,391,200	366,800	1,839,700	108,700
Female 45-49	57,800	1,575,500	327,800	1,961,100	134,700
Female 50-54	36,200	1,586,900	283,800	1,906,900	147,200
Female 55-59	22,000	1,234,300	278,900	1,535,200	147,700
Female 60-64	14,400	627,300	247,400	889,100	153,600
Total	893,000	26,242,200	4,437,200	31,572,400	4,186,000

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Chris Stephens:

[\[16146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, by what date she plans to (a) commence and (b) complete the rollout of recorded personal independence payment assessments for all applicants that wish to opt for one.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants, invited to a telephone assessment, can opt to have their assessment recorded by assessment providers, who will provide the equipment necessary to allow this service to proceed.

The department is currently working with PIP assessment providers to deliver an audio recording service for face to face assessments, that removes the requirement for the claimant to provide the equipment. Work is also ongoing to introduce an audio recording facility for video assessments. This will bring the audio recording of face to face and video assessments in line with the recording of telephone assessments and we aim to complete both as soon as it is practically possible.

Currently, PIP claimants invited to a face to face assessment, can record their assessment themselves, subject to the conditions set by the department. These are listed in the PIP Assessment Guide, and are contained within correspondence sent to claimants from the assessment providers.

Sam Tarry:

[\[16258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason personal independence payment claimants are not permitted to use their own digital recording devices to record their assessments.

Sam Tarry:

[\[16259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to ensure that recording equipment will be available on site for all personal independence payment assessments as soon as face-to-face assessments resume.

Sam Tarry:

[\[16260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy that claimants receive a copy of the recording of Personal Independence Payment assessments on the same day as that assessment.

Sam Tarry:

[\[16261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she will take to ensure that recordings of personal independence payment assessments by private providers are stored securely; and who will have access to those recordings and for what purpose.

Justin Tomlinson:

Claimants may use their own equipment to record their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) face to face assessment, should they wish to, as stated in the PIP Assessment Guide (PIPAG). Certain devices that are capable of editing, real-time streaming or video recording the session are not approved. Non-approved devices include (but are not limited to) PCs, tablets, smart phones, MP3 players, smart watches, and devices that are not capable of providing a verifiable media copy that can be easily checked during the assessment. Acceptable formats for such recordings are restricted to CD and audio cassette only.

We are currently working with providers to deliver an audio recording service for face to face assessments, which resumed on 17 May 2021, that removes the requirement for the claimant to provide the equipment and we aim to complete this as soon as practically possible.

Following assessment, a complete and accurate copy of the recording will be created for both parties. This will ensure that both the claimant and the department have access to an identical copy of the recorded assessment. It is not possible for the HP to provide the claimant with a copy of the audio recording in an acceptable format at the end of the assessment, however, a copy of the recording will be sent to the claimant following the assessment by secure delivery.

The department has worked closely with both PIP assessment providers to ensure the storage of recordings meet the required DWP Security Standards. Access to recordings in the provider space is strictly limited, monitored and controlled. Those who have access will only do so for the purposes of producing a claimant copy of the

recording, for complaint resolution purposes or for benefit decision appeal proceedings.

■ Redundancy: Government Assistance

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[16863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to support people who have been made redundant as a result of the covid-19 outbreak to (a) access training and skills support and (b) secure suitable alternative employment in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions through the Rapid Response Service (RRS) gives support and advice to employers and their employees when faced with redundancy. On receipt of the advance notification of redundancies form (HR1) from the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service, DWP's National Rapid Response Team or the local Rapid Response Team will make contact with the Employer to offer tailored support.

The range of support available from Jobcentre Plus and partners may include:

- Connecting people to jobs in the labour market.
- Help with job search including CV writing, interview skills, where to find jobs and how to apply for them.
- Help to identify transferable skills and skills gaps (linked to the local labour market)
- What benefits they may get and how to claim

This service is co-ordinated nationally by the National Employer and Partnership Team (NEPT) and is managed by Jobcentre Plus. Delivery partners include The National Careers Service, local training providers, Money Advice Service and the skills bodies in England.

In Coventry, the local Jobcentre Redundancy Support Team works closely with Coventry City Council, Coventry Jobshop, National Careers Service, Money Advice Service and SERCO to deliver tailor made local redundancy support. The Coventry Jobshop is an organisation within the Coventry City Council, who support Coventry residents looking for support on a range of things, from budgeting advice, welfare rights and job matching for employers and candidates.

■ Social Security Benefits

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[16193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 11624, and with reference to her Department's response to the Coroner on Mr Boamah's death, what elements of her Department's (a) policy and (b) guidance

were updated following the review of safeguards for vulnerable claimants when making payments to reflect the needs of vulnerable claimants; and on what date was this updated guidance shared with the Coroner.

Justin Tomlinson:

Following Mr Boamah's inquest in 2019 we provided a response to the Coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths report, which is published on the judiciary website.

Since 2019 we have created a central team in the Customer Experience Directorate to focus on strategically supporting our most vulnerable customers.

During 2020 we also revised and developed internal guidance for colleagues to help customers who require advanced support (published March 2021).

We have also appointed 31 regional Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders across Great Britain whose role is to provide targeted support to claimants needing advanced help.

Regarding large one-off payments of Personal Independence Payment to vulnerable customers (as occurred in the case cited), updated guidance for staff was introduced in April this year (2021).

■ **Social Security Benefits: Appeals**

Rosie Duffield:

[\[16930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to monitor and compare the outcomes of assessments and appeals for disability benefits conducted by paper review, telephone and virtual means during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is undertaking an ongoing programme of in-house and externally commissioned research and analysis to understand the consequences of the newly introduced assessment channels.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

Chris Stephens:

[\[16145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress has been made on the rollout of yellow card warnings in place of immediate benefit sanctions.

Mims Davies:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given for PQ [11582](#).

■ **Social Security Benefits: Fraud**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[16128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England who have become victims of social security benefit scams in

each of the last five years; and what steps her Department is taking to (i) support victims of and (ii) prevent such scams.

Will Quince:

We do not hold the requested information.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Long Covid**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[17775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will (a) recognise long covid as a disability and (b) take steps to ensure that people who have been diagnosed with that illness are able to access disability benefits.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment and the Work Capability Assessment (which assesses whether a claimant for Universal Credit (UC) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) has limited capability for work), are functional assessments that assess the impact of a person's disability or health condition, rather than the condition itself. This means that a person with any health condition that has impacts on their functioning, and who meets eligibility criteria, can be assessed and, if they meet the appropriate assessment criteria, an award for PIP or the relevant component of UC/ESA can be made

■ **Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[16127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to improve access to social security benefits for all people in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England who have been diagnosed as terminally ill.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department has published updated guidance for clinicians to support them with completing DS1500s for Special Rules for Terminal Illness claims. We also introduced a dedicated GOV.UK page with information on claiming benefits for those nearing the end of their lives. The Department is committed to delivering an improved benefit system for claimants that are nearing the end of their lives and in July 2019, announced an in-depth evaluation into how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life. The Department is working across Government to bring forward proposals following the evaluation to implement the key areas identified in the evaluation; raising awareness of the support that is available; improving consistency with other services used by people nearing the end of their lives; and a consensus to change the six-month rule.

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[16269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 25 March 2021 to Question 173228 on Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses, what her timescale is for (a) publishing and (b) implementing the recommendations of her

Department's review of the benefits system for terminally ill people and the Special Rules for Terminal Illness scheme announced in July 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is committed to delivering an improved benefit system for claimants that are nearing the end of their lives and is working across Government to bring forward proposals following the evaluation. The Department remains committed to implementing the key areas identified in the evaluation and will announce the outcome in due course.

■ **Universal Credit**

Chris Stephens:

[16144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims in each parliamentary constituency had sums deducted from their claim in the most recent month for which data is available; what the (a) average and (b) total sums deducted in each constituency were; and what proportion of deductions were to repay an advance payment or historic tax credit debt.

Will Quince:

We carefully balance our duty to the taxpayer to recover overpayments with our support for claimants. Safeguards are in place to ensure deductions are manageable. From 12 April 2021, we further reduced the cap on deductions from Universal Credit (UC) awards to 25 per cent and lengthened the payback period from 12 to 24 months meaning in effect someone can receive 25 payments over 24 months, giving them more flexibility over the payments of their UC award. This will also allow claimants to retain more of their award, giving additional financial security.

Customers can contact the Department if they are experiencing financial hardship in order to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, depending on financial circumstances.

The information requested is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. Table 1 [Spreadsheet for UIN 16144.xlsx]

■ **Universal Credit: Payments**

Rachael Maskell:

[16889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what is the average time between people (a) registering for universal credit and (b) receiving their first payment in (i) York and (ii) England in the latest period for which that data is available.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit payment timeliness statistics for new claims are published in Table 6 in the Households on Universal Credit section on Stat-Xplore. These figures can be filtered by different geographies and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Work Capability Assessment

Grahame Morris:

[16067]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 12107 on Work Capability Assessment, how many face to face assessments have been carried out at (a) Elvet House Assessment Centre in Durham, (b) Park Tower Assessment Centre in Hartlepool and (c) The Bridges Assessment Centre in Sunderland since 17 May 2021.

Justin Tomlinson:

The number of face to face assessments carried out at (a) Elvet House Assessment Centre in Durham, (b) Park Tower Assessment Centre in Hartlepool and (c) The Bridges Assessment Centre in Sunderland since 17 May 2021, is shown in the table below;

ASSESSMENT CENTRE	NUMBER OF FACE TO FACE ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED SINCE 17 MAY 2021 TO 15 JUNE 2021
Elvet House, Durham	52
Park Tower, Hartlepool	24
The Bridges, Sunderland	58

The department has worked with providers to put a range of measures in place to control and manage Covid-19 risk in assessment centres in line with Government Guidance, so that assessments can take place safely. These measures include, changes to assessment booking procedures to stagger appointment times and limit the number of people in an assessment centre at any one time and additional touchpoint cleaning within assessment rooms following each assessment. These procedures have an effect on the number of face to face assessments providers can conduct daily, whilst maintaining compliance with Covid-19 health and safety measures.

At present, face to face assessments are only being carried out for claimants we have been unable to assess by other means. We continue to conduct paper-based assessments, telephone assessments and some video assessments where suitable.

■ **Workplace Pensions**

Jonathan Reynolds:

[16844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will provide the records of any meetings she or her Ministers have had with (a) the People's Pension and (b) NEST in the last four years.

Guy Opperman:

The Government publishes an unprecedented amount of transparency data; Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers and Permanent Secretaries meetings with external organisations.

Published transparency returns can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-ministers-hospitality-and-gifts>

The Department is the sponsor Government Department of Nest and routinely meets with representatives of this organisation to discuss matters relating to policy, service and delivery through its governance and stewardship arrangements.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Update on Myanmar

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab): [\[HCWS106\]](#)

The UK condemns the coup in Myanmar in the strongest possible terms and we continue to stand with the people of Myanmar as they face increased levels of intimidation, violence, suppression, and arbitrary detention from the military regime.

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response, most recently securing a statement on Myanmar in the G7 Leader's communiqué on 13 June. We also secured a G7 commitment to prevent flow of arms to Myanmar, a commitment which was echoed in the UN General Assembly Resolution of 18 June.

Today we are announcing further measures to target the military and its financial interests.

Sanctions

The UK has worked in close collaboration with partners to implement effective and targeted sanctions. On 29 April we laid new Myanmar (Sanctions) Regulations 2021, to give us broader powers to target the Myanmar military and its business interests.

Today, the UK is announcing its sixth tranche of sanctions since the coup and the second under our new regulations. New designations will target Myanmar Timber Enterprise (MTE) and Myanmar Pearl Enterprise (MPE), two state owned entities in Myanmar's extractive sector, which generate millions of pounds in revenue for the junta. We are also designating the State Administration Council (SAC), the junta's governing body, to send a clear message to the regime that we oppose the coup and associated human rights violations.

These designations build on the UK's continued efforts to target the military's economic infrastructure and revenue streams used to finance brutal human rights violations and repression of the civilian population. On 17 May we announced the designation of Myanmar Gems Enterprise under our new regulations. We have also listed Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited and Myanmar Economic Corporation, two military conglomerates under our Global Human Rights regime.

Trade Review

Since February we have conducted an extensive series of engagements with UK businesses and trade bodies conducting business within Myanmar; and have undertaken due diligence on the operations of the Department for International Trade (DIT) and our partners in the country.

We will retain our suspension on trade promotion and are reiterating that UK businesses should not enter into relationships that benefit the military and must remain compliant with

the UK sanctions regime. Further, we expect British businesses to adhere to and work with suppliers who comply with standards of responsible business conduct, including respecting human rights.

Through this review we have determined that no sector can be classified as completely free from military associations and that some, such as the extractive industries, have a particularly high level of association. Sectors in which DIT has historically offered trade support do not fall into this category of high-level exposure.

Equally, we recognise that the complete withdrawal of all international businesses from Myanmar would deepen the collapse of the economy, risk increasing regional instability, and above all negatively impact the most vulnerable in society.

The Overseas Business Risk Guidance, published today, provides further clarity on issues raised by businesses throughout the Trade Review process, recognising the complex and unique challenges organisations face in these circumstances. In particular, we have made clear that UK businesses procuring natural resources from Myanmar must do enhanced due diligence on their supply chain. DIT and Embassy staff in Yangon remain available to assist UK businesses in remaining compliant with their obligations.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Progress on Large Civil Aircraft Disputes

Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss): [\[HCWS104\]](#)

On Thursday 17 June I struck a historic deal with the US on the Airbus-Boeing disputes in a major win for both the aerospace sector and for industries like Scotch whisky.

After talks with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, both sides have agreed to suspend retaliatory tariffs for 5 years and cooperate more closely on tackling unfair trade practices by non-market economies.

These 17-year disputes, the longest-running in the history of the World Trade Organisation, have seen damaging retaliatory tariffs levied on products on both sides of the Atlantic due to disagreements over support for large civil aircraft.

The disagreement has hit industries such as cashmere, machinery, and single-malt Scotch whisky that employ tens of thousands of people across the UK. The Scotch Whisky Association estimates the tariffs have cost the sector hundreds of millions of pounds in lost revenue.

The UK, which was involved as a member of the EU, took the decision to deescalate these disputes by unilaterally suspending retaliatory tariffs on the US at the start of this year, which encouraged the US to agree to a four-month suspension of tariffs while both sides negotiated a longer-term arrangement.

The UK and US will now work together to put the agreement into practice and strengthen cooperation in the large civil aircraft sector.

This deal marks our joint intention for the UK and US to:

- Not impose countermeasures for 5 years.
- Establish a working group on large civil aircraft that is led by the respective Minister responsible for trade.
- Provide financing to a large civil aircraft producer for the production or development of large civil aircraft on market terms.
- Provide research & development funding for large civil aircraft: through an open and transparent process; making the results widely available; and not providing research and development funding, or other support, to producers of large civil aircraft in a way that would cause negative effects to the other side.
- Collaborate on tackling non-market practices of third countries that may impact on their large civil aircraft industries.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland update

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis):

[[HCWS105](#)]

The Government is committed to the delivery of the New Decade, New Approach agreement in full. It was the basis upon which the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement institutions were restored. Full implementation of New Decade, New Approach remains important to the ongoing stability of those institutions. Recognising Northern Ireland's rich diversity of identities and languages, it is essential that the balanced cultural package the parties agreed to is implemented in full.

If the Executive has not progressed the legislation for the identity, language and culture package in the New Decade, New Approach agreement by the end of September, the UK Government will take the legislation through the UK Parliament. The New Decade, New Approach agreement was endorsed by the UK Parliament, and we will introduce the legislation that delivers on these commitments in October 2021, if necessary. This will provide for the creation of an Office for Identity and Cultural Expression, an Ulster Scots Commissioner, and an Irish language Commissioner.