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Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Cars

Neil Coyle:

[\[18533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will introduce a car scrappage scheme which incentivises people to replace their higher-polluting vehicle with an electric or hybrid vehicle.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is providing significant support to consumers and businesses to purchase and run ultra-low emission vehicles and therefore has no plans to introduce a car scrappage scheme.

The Government has already committed £1.5 billion to support the early market and remove barriers to zero emission vehicle ownership. Alongside the new phase out dates of 2030 and 2035 my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced in his Ten Point Plan in November, we have pledged a further £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the transition to zero emission vehicles. This package includes up to £1 billion for R&D and capital investments in strategically important parts of the electric vehicle supply chain, £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure and £582 million for plug in vehicle grants.

Additionally, the Government already provides a number of subsidies for consumers and businesses to purchase and run ultra-low emission vehicles, including the plug-in car and van grants (£2,500 towards eligible cars costing less than £35,000, small vans can receive up to £3,000 and large vans up to £6,000) lower tax rates, and grants towards the installation of chargepoints.

The transition to zero emission vehicles will help meet greenhouse gas reduction goals, contribute to reducing poor air quality in our towns and cities and can contribute to economic growth in the UK by providing skilled jobs in the automotive sector.

■ Clean Steel Fund

Alex Sobel:

[\[18582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how his Department is planning to allocate the Clean Steel Fund; and when that allocation will be announced.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department announced the Clean Steel Fund (CSF) in 2019 and it is currently in development. This policy will take time to design in order to be delivered effectively.

Based on previous evidence, complex decarbonisation projects have long lead-in times and take time to set up. Due to this and other factors, the steel sector indicated in response to the 2019 Call for Evidence that their preference is for the CSF to be launched in 2023. Other schemes are available to support the sector and are live now, including the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund.

■ Construction: Apprentices and Training

Neil Coyle:

[18535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support training and apprenticeships in the construction sector to increase the number of qualified insulators to help meet targets to reduce emissions from people's homes.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) launched a £6.9m skills competition in September 2020 to provide training opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains to deliver works and scale up to meet additional consumer demand. Funding is provided to support training individuals with existing skills and those new to the sector in energy efficiency and clean heat measures, along with support for installation companies to gain the required PAS 2030 standards or Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accreditation, including possible contribution to certification costs.

Applications for the scheme are now closed. 18 successful applicants have been awarded a total sum of £6.4 million and have now started training, offering free or subsidised courses covering a wide range of skills and certifications across both energy efficiency and clean heat measures.

The Government is investing in the UK workforce to ensure that people have the right skills and qualifications to deliver the low-carbon transition and thrive in the high-value jobs this will create. BEIS and the Department for Education (DfE) are jointly leading work to consider the skills and jobs needed to help deliver net zero, including green retrofit skills. The [Green Jobs Taskforce](#) is working with industry, unions and providers to develop solutions and recommendations that will be refined into a shortlist of high impact actions that will make up a final Green Jobs Action Plan due to be published in Summer 2021.

■ Construction: Small Businesses

Fleur Anderson:

[20552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the national shortages of building materials reported by the Construction Leadership Council in May 2021, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) micro, (b) small and (c) medium-sized construction firms continue to have access to building materials.

Fleur Anderson:**[20554]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the national shortage of building materials reported by the Construction Leadership Council in May 2021, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of that shortage on the Government's ability to fulfil its commitment to upgrade as many homes as possible to EPC Band C by 2035.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is aware that a range of building materials are in short supply nationally. This is driven by demand and increased global competition to secure supplies.

In light of this, and in view of more local disruptions in the supply of some products, the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force has established a Product Availability Working Group, comprised of product manufacturers, builders' merchants and suppliers, contractors of all sizes, and housebuilders. The Task Force continues to monitor the supply and demand of products, and identify those in short supply.

The Task Force also issues regular statements on product availability. The Task Force has set out that where products are in short supply, any allocation systems should be as transparent as possible so that all customers can be seen to be treated fairly. Additionally, the Task Force has emphasised the importance of good forward-planning and clear communication within the industry. The Task Force has also recommended that where relevant, production for major projects should not be seen to adversely affect volumes available for smaller, regular customers.

The product availability statements also include detailed updates on the availability of specific products in affected material areas in order to keep the market informed. These can be accessed at: <https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/>.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not made an assessment of the potential effect of the current shortage of building materials on the Government's ability to fulfil its commitment to upgrade as many homes as possible to EPC Band C by 2035.

■ Fuel Cells: Manufacturing Industries**Ruth Edwards:****[18610]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to support the development of hydrogen fuel cell gigafactories in the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK has great strengths in electrochemical technologies, including hydrogen fuel cells. UK companies are already exporting fuel cells into global markets for use in transport as well as heat and power.

The UK fuel cell market is at an early stage of development and focus to date has been on supporting innovation and early deployment, mostly in transport, rather than mass production. The £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is funding the deployment of around 300 hydrogen vehicles and supporting infrastructure. The £2m FCEV Fleet Support Scheme is supporting public and private sector fleets to become early adopters of these vehicles. A total of four fuel cell innovation projects (total grant £2.2million) with UK industry have been funded through BEIS Energy Entrepreneurs Fund.

Investment in innovation, along with wider efforts to establish a domestic market for hydrogen and understand high value opportunities for UK technology deployment and exports will inform our future approach to UK manufacturing of hydrogen-related technologies including fuel cells.

■ Future Fund

Alex Sobel:

[\[18588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish (a) the full criteria applied to applications for the Future Fund: Breakthrough scheme and (b) an annual list of successful applicants and their co-investors.

Paul Scully:

Future Fund: Breakthrough, due to launch later this summer, is a new £375m UK-wide scheme that will encourage private investors to co-invest alongside government in high-growth, innovative firms. The scheme will be run by the British Business Bank.

Future Fund: Breakthrough will provide equity finance to innovative companies that are able to attract a minimum level of investment from the private sector. Companies must be UK-based with significant UK operations, they must have a track record of investment in research and development, and applications must be led by an established venture capital investor.

More details, including the full eligibility criteria, will be published on the British Business Bank's website at the launch of the scheme. Arrangements for publishing investments will be decided in due course.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Neil Coyle:

[\[18536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish the Pathway to Net Zero strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We will publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy. This will raise ambition as we outline our path to meet net zero by 2050, our Carbon Budgets and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

■ Heating: Listed Buildings

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[21313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 21 April 2021 to Question 182074 on the Green Homes Grant Scheme, what policies his Department plans to implement to decarbonise the heating of listed buildings where low carbon options are economically unviable or prohibited by planning law.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Further to the response to Question 182074 of 21 April 2021, the Government recognises that some households, including those living in listed buildings, may need additional support to decarbonise, particularly if they are on a lower income or vulnerable. The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings.

The Government is putting affordability and fairness at the heart of our reforms. We will continue support to lower income households and the vulnerable to make homes greener, through schemes such as the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). HUG will provide energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating to low-income households living off the gas grid in England to tackle fuel poverty and meet net zero. An initial £150m was allocated to HUG in the 2020 spending review and will be delivered alongside a £200m third tranche of Local Authority Delivery (LAD) as a £350m Sustainable Warmth competition, which was launched on 16 June, with delivery expected to run from early 2022 to March 2023. The ECO, worth £640m per year, is already supporting low income and vulnerable households with energy efficiency and heating measures. The next iteration of ECO will run from 2022 to 2026 with an increase in value from £640m to £1bn per year .

The Government will also be launching the Clean Heat Grant from 2022 to 2024. The scheme will support homes to transition from high carbon fossil fuel heating sources to low carbon heating , such as heat pumps or alternatives including biomass boilers where heat pumps are unsuitable.

Additionally, property owners may consult the Simple Energy Advice (SEA) service, and a retrofit coordinator for further advice and information on improving their building's energy performance.

■ Hydrogen

Alex Sobel:

[\[18581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his department plans go publish the Hydrogen Strategy, and whether that strategy will make an assessment of the role that hydrogen can play in decarbonising steelmaking.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We intend to publish the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy before summer recess. The Strategy will set out what is required to build a hydrogen economy fit for 2030, Carbon Budget 6 and beyond, whilst maximising economic benefits. It will also discuss the role of low carbon hydrogen as a leading option for decarbonising industrial processes. Alongside this, we will also consult on priority policies including a hydrogen business model, a low carbon hydrogen standard, and the £240m Net Zero Hydrogen Fund.

The UK is monitoring international progress on low carbon steel making trials, using hydrogen and other technologies, and is actively engaged in international initiatives to support industrial decarbonisation innovation, including the Mission Innovation platform and the Leadership Group for Industry Transition.

Decarbonising UK industry is a core part of the Government's ambitious plan for the green industrial revolution. The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, published on 17 March, commits government to work with the Steel Council to consider the implications of the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to 'set targets for ore-based steelmaking to reach near-zero emissions by 2035'. The Steel Council offers the forum for government, industry and trade unions to work in partnership on the shared objective of creating an achievable, long-term plan to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future. Hydrogen-based steelmaking is one of the technological approaches being examined as part of this process.

The UK steel sector will be given the opportunity to bid into industrial fuel switching innovation programmes under the £1bn NZIP portfolio, which is intended to promote switching away from more carbon-intensive fuel sources. The Government has also announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the UK steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production, through investment in new technologies and processes.

■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions**Alex Sobel:****[18583]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to commit to a 2035 target for near zero emissions in the steel sector in the Net Zero Strategy.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, published on 17 March, commits to work with the newly constituted Steel Council to consider the implications of the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to 'set targets for ore-based steelmaking to reach near-zero emissions by 2035'. The Steel Council offers the forum for government, industry and trade unions to work in partnership on the shared objective of creating an achievable, long-term plan to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future.

■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

Alex Sobel:

[\[18579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's long-term plan is to support the creation of green jobs in the UK steel industry.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Levelling up and ensuring high-quality employment across every region of the UK is a key element in the Government's Plan for Growth. It is estimated that the UK low-carbon economy could grow more than four times faster than the rest of the economy between 2015 and 2030 and support up to 2 million jobs. The Government will ensure that the benefits of our growing low-carbon economy are shared fairly in every region.

Alex Sobel:

[\[18580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of international progress on trials of hydrogen-based steelmaking; and if he will take steps to introduce a similar pilot in the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The UK is monitoring international progress on low carbon steel making trials, using hydrogen and other technologies, and is actively engaged in international initiatives to support industrial decarbonisation innovation, including the Mission Innovation platform and the Leadership Group for Industry Transition.

Decarbonising UK industry is a core part of the government's ambitious plan for the green industrial revolution. The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, published on 17 March, commits government to work with the Steel Council to consider the implications of the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to 'set targets for ore-based steelmaking to reach near-zero emissions by 2035'. The Steel Council offers the forum for government, industry and trade unions to work in partnership on the shared objective of creating an achievable, long-term plan to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future. Hydrogen-based steelmaking is one of the technological approaches being examined as part of this process.

The UK steel sector will be given the opportunity to bid into industrial fuel switching innovation programmes under the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio (NZIP), which is intended to promote switching away from more carbon-intensive fuel sources. The Government has also announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the UK steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production, through investment in new technologies and processes.

■ Life Sciences

Alex Sobel:

[\[18586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish his Department's Life Sciences Strategy.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Office for Life Sciences are leading on the development of a Life Sciences Sector Vision, which is due to be published over the Summer.

The Vision will form part of the HM Treasury Plan for Growth agenda, published at the Budget in March and will build on the successes of the 2017 Life Sciences Strategy, spearheaded by Sir John Bell.

The Life Sciences Vision will be co-developed with industry and set out the Government's ambitions for the Life Sciences sector over the next decade. It provides an opportunity to take into account the strengths of UK Life Sciences illustrated by COVID, put fresh energy behind the 2017 strategy themes, and identify new and emerging opportunities for the sector.

■ Life Sciences: Animal Experiments

Alex Sobel:

[\[18587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that increased life sciences sector activity and funding does not result in increased numbers of animal experiments.

Alex Sobel:

[\[18590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has any plans to use the UK's status as an independent nation outside the EU to set a global standard on actively phasing out animal testing.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government believes that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and it actively supports and funds the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). This is achieved primarily through funding for the National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs), which works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of 3Rs technologies and to ensure that advances in the 3Rs are reflected in policy, practice and regulations on animal research. Since the NC3Rs was launched it has committed £100 million through its research, innovation, and early career awards to provide new 3Rs approaches for scientists in academia and industry to use.

The NC3Rs is widely regarded as being world leading and has an ambitious international programme to reduce the use of animals in safety testing by working with regulators and companies from the pharmaceutical, chemical, agrochemical and consumer product sectors. This has led to changes in international regulations and company practices. Recent work includes the publication of the findings of a global data sharing project, led by the NC3Rs, that indicates that there are opportunities to

shift to using one animal species rather than two for some chronic toxicity studies used in pharmaceutical drug evaluation.

There has been a concern that increased life sciences activity resulting from research to find a treatment for the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased use of animals in research. However, as detailed in the EU Clinical Trials Register (<https://www.clinicaltrialsregister.eu/>) or Clinicaltrials.gov (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/>), the majority of products in these trials are “re-purposed” drugs and have already been developed for treatment of similar viral outbreaks, such as SARS and MERS, or have been used to treat acute respiratory distress syndrome or other inflammatory conditions. As such, none of these have required additional animal testing.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. The rapid development of vaccines for COVID-19 has been based on a concept that the MHRA has long followed. Previous animal work on very similar vaccines have been used to support the development of the new vaccines and has reduced the number of animal studies.

The MHRA work very closely with NC3Rs in bringing together stakeholders in academia, industry, government and animal welfare organisations to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, and the translation of research findings into practice that benefits both animals and science.

■ **Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund**

Alex Sobel:

[18589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his department will publish (a) the full criteria applied to applications for the Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund and (b) an annual list of successful applicants to that fund.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The full criteria applied to applications for the Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund has been published and can be accessed via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/988194/mdmtf-medicines-diagnostics-manufacturing-transformation-fund-scheme-guidance.pdf.

The fund runs only for a single year. We will ensure that the names of successful applicants to the fund are published in a timely manner.

■ **Travel Agents: Coronavirus**

Bill Wiggin:

[18485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of changing travel agencies

from non-essential retail to part of the culture, tourism, leisure and sport category to increase their eligibility for covid-19 support.

Paul Scully:

While no specific assessment has been made by the Department of the potential merits of changing travel agencies from non-essential retail to part of the culture, tourism, leisure and sport category, we have provided a range of measures to support all types of businesses including non-essential retail.

In the March Budget, my Rt hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced new 'Restart Grants' of up to £6,000 per premises for non-essential retail businesses and up to £18,000 per premises for hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses in England. The Government is also providing all local authorities in England with an additional £425 million of discretionary business grant funding, on top of the £1.6 billion already allocated.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Access to Information Central Clearing House

Angela Rayner:

[21236]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the annual running costs are of the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for Freedom of Information requests; and which staff of his Department have responsibilities within the Clearing House.

Angela Rayner:

[21237]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many requests for advice on handling Freedom of Information requests the central Cabinet Office Clearing House has received in each of the last two years.

Chloe Smith:

The Clearing House function does not have full time members of staff, and its work is done by a small team of people in the FOI team, including the Deputy Director of Freedom of Information and Transparency, alongside their other day to day responsibilities. There is no separate budget for the Clearing House.

The Cabinet Office does not routinely capture data on the number of requests which are referred to the Clearing House. However, in 2020, Clearing House gave advice on 516 aggregated 'round robins' (requests made to more than one department and that have repeat characteristics); a small proportion of over 30,000 requests received by government departments in the same time period.

The Cabinet Office has referred requests to the Clearing House where appropriate and in line with the published criteria, which is available on gov.uk here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-and-freedom-of-information>.

Information on Freedom of Information statistics is also published on gov.uk here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics>.

■ Civil Service: Re-employment

Angela Rayner: [\[21235\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, whether his Department has received any communication from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government under paragraph 4 of the Civil Service Management Code in relation to proposals to change terms and conditions for civil servants employed by Homes England; and what steps he has taken to communicate his policy that threatening fire and rehire as a negotiating tactic is unacceptable to (a) Homes England and (b) the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Chloe Smith:

As referenced in the answer to [PQ 15260](#) the Civil Service Management Code (CSMC) only binds organisations that employ civil servants, which Homes England do not. It is for Homes England to decide how to manage their workforce and related pay processes.

■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries

Ed Davey: [\[21137\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on the commencement of the public inquiry into covid-19.

Ed Davey: [\[21138\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress he has made on the commencement of the public inquiry into the handling of the covid-19 outbreak.

Chloe Smith:

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed to this House that a public inquiry into COVID-19 would be established on a statutory basis, with full formal powers, and that it will begin its work in spring 2022.

Further details, including terms of reference, will be set out in due course.

■ Cybercrime

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[20326\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to respond to changes in the cyber security challenge over the 2019 Parliament.

Penny Mordaunt:

Cyber security is a key priority for this Government. Advances in cyber technologies are revolutionising the way in which we live our lives and guard our national security,

and our aim is to ensure citizens can enjoy the benefits this brings while mitigating the risks. The Covid pandemic has made the UK more reliant on digital technologies and we are seeing a growth in damaging threats such as ransomware.

Our National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) continues to work closely with law enforcement, government and industry to tackle cyber threats and support the country's response to the covid-19 crisis, publishing guidance and identifying and removing malicious sites. This includes ramping up the Active Cyber Defence Programme, launching the Suspicious Email Reporting tool and working closely with the NHS to keep their systems and the healthcare sector safe. We are able to draw upon these resources because of the implementation of the 2016 National Cyber Security Strategy.

We are also planning for the future to strengthen our approach and maintain the UK's position as a leading responsible and democratic cyber power. Later this year we will be launching a new comprehensive Cyber Strategy, setting out how we will build up the UK's cyber resilience; detect, disrupt and deter our adversaries; and shape, influence and unlock tomorrow's technologies and opportunities so they are safe, secure and open.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[21152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, what steps the Government is taking to assist Afghans who have themselves, or their family members, provided service to UK armed forces and who remain the country and face violence from the Taliban.

James Heapey:

We owe a debt of gratitude to interpreters and other locally employed staff who risked their lives working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan and the Government has already supported more than 1,380 former Afghan staff and their families to create new lives in the UK.

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched on 1 April 2021. It acknowledges and reflects the fact that the situation in Afghanistan has changed, and with it the potential risk to current and former locally employed staff who worked for the UK Government over the past twenty years.

Under the new policy, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served. Locally Employed Staff who have worked in roles which could have exposed their identities and placed them at risk of reprisals as a result of their work for the UK Government are relocated to the UK by default at their request.

We are significantly accelerating the pace of relocations in parallel with the military withdrawal, but our commitment to those who are eligible under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure.

■ **Armed Forces: Young People**

Carol Monaghan: [\[21260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of armed forces enlistment before the age of 18 on the mental health of those service personnel.

Carol Monaghan: [\[21261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the finding of (a) the King's Centre for Military Health Research and (b) the University of Glasgow that enlisting in the armed forces before 18 years of age can adversely impact on mental health outcomes, what plans he has to ensure that service personnel who enlist in the armed forces before 18 years of age do not experience poorer mental health outcomes than (i) service personnel who enlist in the armed forces as adults and (ii) civilians of the same age and socioeconomic background.

Leo Docherty:

The recent studies conducted by the King's Centre for Military Health Research and the University of Glasgow on the health outcomes of junior entrants to the UK Armed Forces have found there is little evidence that early recruitment is associated with an adverse impact on long-term mental health. Findings from these studies indicate that those who enter service as junior entrants have a lower risk of long-term mental health disorder than those recruited at older ages.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of all our Armed Forces personnel, regardless of age, and recognises that Service life can cause stress. All Armed Forces personnel are supported by dedicated and comprehensive medical services including mental health support. MOD is working with the single Services, Defence Medical Services, and other stakeholders to promote mental fitness and reduce associated stigma.

The MOD is clear that the duty of care of all our recruits, and in particular those aged under 18, is of the utmost importance and that those aged under 18 should be treated with special consideration. All Phase 1 and Phase 2 training organisations are subject to Ofsted inspection on a routine basis. Ofsted's last inspection of the Army Foundation College Harrogate in May 2018 awarded 'Outstanding' in all three assessment categories (outcomes for recruits and trainees; quality of welfare and duty of care; effectiveness of leadership and management).

■ Immigration: Afghanistan

Luke Pollard:

[\[19672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it is the Government's policy to work to a target date of September 2021, in alignment with the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, to extract the wives and children of the Afghan interpreters who are currently in the UK.

Leo Docherty:

We are significantly accelerating the pace of relocations in parallel with the military withdrawal, this includes eligible spouses and families who were left in Afghanistan when the staff member relocated to the UK. Our commitment to those who are eligible under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure.

Luke Pollard:

[\[19674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support the Government is providing to Afghan interpreters who have fled that country and are now processed in third-country asylum systems, in circumstances where they cannot apply for relocation to the UK from a third country.

Leo Docherty:

Our priority is to relocate those applicants currently in Afghanistan where they are likely to face the greatest risk. Applications are made online or by phone initially. We will always consider exceptionally compelling and compassionate circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[20328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 12970 on Mali: Peacekeeping Operations, how many soldiers in Mali tested positive for covid-19 between January 2020 and March 2020.

James Heapey:

Between January 2020 and March 2020 there were no UK Service personnel deployed on peacekeeping operations in Mali. Between January 2021 and March 2021 there were two confirmed COVID-19 positive test cases amongst UK Service personnel deployed in support of peacekeeping operations in Mali.

■ Merchant Shipping: Pensions

Matt Rodda:

[\[18563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the potential future cost to the public purse in the (a) short term and (b) long term in relation to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's role as a sponsoring employer of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund scheme.

Matt Rodda: [\[18564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the projected average future entitlement for members of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund scheme through the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Leo Docherty:

Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) seafarers are Ministry of Defence (MOD) employees and members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The RFA does not sponsor the Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund and the MOD is not responsible for any costs or entitlements associated with it.

■ Military Alliances

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[20325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he is having with international partners on joint capability programmes.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence maintains a range of dialogues with strategic international partners to explore research, capability and industrial collaborative opportunities and deliver collaborative programmes. Specific examples include Eurofighter, A400M and Boxer. As outlined in the Defence & Security Industrial Strategy, these relationships start with Euro-Atlantic partnerships, in particular NATO and the US, and extends to our unique network of strategic partnerships across the globe, including with Indo-Pacific and Five Eyes partners.

■ Ministry of Defence: Training

Philip Davies: [\[19553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, on Unconscious bias training, what steps he has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in his Department.

Leo Docherty:

Defence is continually looking at ways to build a fairer, more inclusive, and more effective workplace.

Last year, the Government Equalities Office commissioned a report into unconscious bias and diversity training. It concluded that the training was not achieving its intended aims and would be phased out. In response to this, the Ministry of Defence has phased out unconscious bias training within the Department.

To ensure we continue to build fairer and more effective workplaces the *Diversity and Inclusion 2020* course has been replaced by the *Inclusion in the Civil Service* course. The Inclusion in the Civil Service course comprises of four modules (Equality, diversity, and inclusion in the Civil Service; Our inclusive workplace; Our customers; the legal framework) and has had the unconscious bias training elements removed.

■ Qatar: Military Aid

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[21340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department made of Qatar's role in financing (a) al-Nusrah Front in Syria, (b) the Taliban in Afghanistan and (c) other groups that the UK recognises as terrorist organisations before establishing the Royal Air Force joint squadrons with Qatar.

James Heapey:

All relevant considerations were taken into account when deciding to establish joint squadrons with Qatar. The long-standing friendship between the UK and Qatar is more important than ever. With shared defence and security interests, it is vital we work together for both regional and global stability.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ BBC: Expenditure

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[21155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 17696 on BBC: Disclosure of Information and with reference to the BBC Board's responsibility for appropriate use of licence fee payers' money, who is ultimately responsible for the use of licence fee payers money that is deemed inappropriate.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The BBC Board is responsible for ensuring the BBC delivers its Charter obligations, including its mission and public purposes and for the appropriate use of licence fee revenue. Under the Royal Charter, the Board must put in place 'appropriate policies and controls to ensure that licence fee and other income is spent and operations are managed efficiently, effectively and in accordance with regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility'.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of the NAO is the BBC's independent external auditor. The NAO is responsible for auditing the BBC accounts and ensuring value for money in the way the BBC uses its funds.

■ Choirs: Coronavirus

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[16914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether amateur choirs are permitted to rehearse in groups of more than six under the Performing Arts Guidance at Roadmap Step 3 if the rehearsals lead to a performance for commercial activity.

Caroline Dinenge:

Non-professional groups of up to six people can now sing indoors, in line with the rule of 6 which applies 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.

It is important that we continue taking a cautious approach in easing these restrictions, so that we can see the impact of the steps we are taking before moving to the next step. The Performing Arts Guidance sets out what this means for amateur singing in more detail. We are aware that some amateur groups perform in professional contexts, and even in national institutions, such as the Royal Albert Hall. Whilst the limits do not apply to activity taking place for work or commercial activity, it is for organisers and venues to determine how to operate in accordance with the relevant guidance and regulations.

Further details on moving to step 4 of the Roadmap will be set out as soon as possible, and the decision to move to step 4 will be made subject to the four tests for easing restrictions.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Alison McGovern:

[\[21206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the adequacy of supply of covid-19 lateral flow tests; and what assessment he has made of whether there will be adequate supplies of those tests to enable planned summer events to go ahead safely.

Nigel Huddleston:

Last year we quickly established one of the largest asymptomatic testing programmes in the world. We have now conducted over 90m lateral flow tests in England alone, finding nearly 200k cases. Home testing has been confirmed for some Events Research Programme (ERP) pilots only, and is not indicative of Step 4 policy decisions. ERP learnings will feed into wider policy making on step 4, and further details on broader testing policy will be released in due course. Current asymptomatic testing is available until 31 July, with further decisions on extending this to be taken in line with Step 4 of the Prime Minister's roadmap.

■ **Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus**

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[17015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the support provided to the culture and arts sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenge:

I know the cultural and arts sectors have been hugely impacted by Covid, with the effects felt across individual business and organisations, as well as staff, freelancers and supply chains. That is why last year the government announced the unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the culture sector. To date, over

£1.2 billion has been allocated from this fund, reaching over 5000 individual organisations and sites.

In the 2021 Budget, the Chancellor announced an additional £300 million to support theatres, museums and other cultural organisations in England through the Culture Recovery Fund. This extra funding, together with other cultural support such as funding for our national museums, means that our total support package for culture during the pandemic is now approaching £2 billion. These are unprecedented sums and this is the largest one-off investment in UK culture.

The arts and culture sector has also been eligible to access pan economic Government COVID-19 support throughout the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes various Government-backed loans, business grants, reduction in VAT and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes. Organisations in this sector were also able to access the discretionary Local Restrictions Support Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant which provided Local Authorities with funds to support businesses who met the eligibility criteria. And, earlier this year the Chancellor also announced one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring and eviction protection has been extended for businesses most in need.

■ **Data Protection: Regulation**

Patrick Grady: [\[21255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the recommendation contained in the Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform report, published 16 June 2021, to replace the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2018 with a new UK Framework.

Patrick Grady: [\[21256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to retain the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Mr John Whittingdale:

As my right honourable friend the Prime Minister has said, we thank the Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform for their report, which the Government will consider and respond to in due course.

Outside of the EU, the UK now controls its own data protection laws and regulations. We want our data regime to remain fit for purpose, and to support the future objectives of the UK. We will continue to operate a high-quality regime that promotes growth and innovation, and underpins the trustworthy use of data.

■ **Events Industry: Coronavirus**

Alison McGovern: [\[21207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the results of the Events Research Programme.

Alison McGovern: [21209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish a list all ministers, including the Prime Minister who have received a copy of the Events Research Programme results.

Alex Norris: [21324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason the Government is not yet in a position to publish the (a) evidence and (b) report on the event research programme.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Events Research Programme report was published on Friday 25 June and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/events-research-programme-phase-i-findings>

The Events Research Programme is a joint programme between DCMS, DHSC, and BEIS overseen by an industry-led steering group co-chaired by Sir Nicholas Hytner and David Ross. Evidence from the pilot events is considered by the group to make recommendations to the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State for DCMS, BEIS and DHSC on how restrictions could be safely lifted at Step 4 of the Roadmap.

The report has been subject to a comprehensive and rigorous coordination and approval process across departments, academic institutions and ERP governance boards, and takes into account the latest public health data.

Alison McGovern: [21208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish all (a) economic and (b) other assessments of the effect of not allowing large events during the covid-19 outbreak in summer 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the challenging times facing all sectors currently, and continue to support them in line with the prime minister's roadmap to the full reopening of the economy.

Although we have no plans currently to publish an assessment, the Department has been working closely with stakeholders across large event settings throughout the pandemic, and this has helped us to understand both the nature and the scale of the impact this sector has faced.

Step 4 of The Prime Minister's roadmap allows large events to go ahead in Summer 2021 without restrictions. The roadmap sets out a cautious and gradual approach - led by data, not dates - and while we know there may be loss of some business as a result of the delay to step 4, public health must remain the government's top priority.

Alison McGovern: [21210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the financial situation of

companies in the live events industry supply chain due to the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS continues to work closely with other government departments, academic institutions and stakeholders to review evidence on the impact of ongoing restrictions within the live events industries.

Most of the financial support schemes do not end until September or after, in order to provide continuity and certainty for businesses.

Throughout this pandemic there has been over £400 billion of economic support, one of the most generous and comprehensive packages in the world.

Although there is no current plan to make a statement on financial situations of individual sectors/settings, our engagements have helped us to understand both the nature and scale of the impact that this particular industry has faced.

■ **Football: Females**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[20447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason women's football was classified as a non-elite sport during the recent covid-19 lockdowns; and if he will review that classification in the event of a future lockdown.

Nigel Huddleston:

It is up to the respective governing bodies to determine what constitutes the boundary between elite and non-elite within their sports. Government regulations relating to arrangements for sport during the COVID-19 pandemic do not distinguish between men's and women's sport.

We are absolutely committed to women's sport. I meet regularly with the Football Association to discuss a range of issues, and we continue to liaise closely with them on women's football.

It is also worth noting that in February we announced £2.25 million support for Women's Super League and the FA Women's Championship, alongside a further announcement in March for £680,000 in grant funding for six women's football clubs.

■ **Gambling: Advertising**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[19575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of adding trigger warnings to gambling advertising during sport broadcasts.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[19576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had with (i) broadcasters and

(ii) sport organisations on placing trigger warnings on gambling advertising during sport broadcasts.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[19577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had with people who have been harmed by gambling on the value of trigger warnings on broadcast gambling advertising.

Mr John Whittingdale:

All gambling advertising, wherever it appears, is subject to strict controls on content and placement. Gambling operators advertising in the UK must abide by the advertising codes issued by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) for online and non-broadcast spaces and the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) for TV and radio. The Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising additionally mandates that a safer gambling message must appear on screen throughout all televised adverts, along with the inclusion of the address begambleaware.org (which signposts to a wide range of advice and support related to gambling). The Industry Code also requires safer gambling messages in all radio adverts.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. As part of the wide scope of that Review, we called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing gambling operators to advertise and the effectiveness of mandatory safer gambling messages in adverts in preventing harm. The Call for Evidence closed on 31 March and received approximately 16,000 submissions from a broad range of interested organisations and individuals, including broadcasters, sporting bodies and individuals and organisations representing those with lived experience of gambling-related harm. We are considering all the evidence received carefully and aim to publish a white paper by the end of the year outlining our conclusions and policy proposals.

■ Ofcom: Public Appointments

Chi Onwurah:

[\[20401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason he is restarting the process for appointing a new Ofcom Chair; and how long that process will take.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Under the Governance Code for public appointments, Ministers should be presented with a choice of high quality candidates drawn from a strong and diverse field from which to make an appointment. Unfortunately this was not achieved during the campaign to appoint the Chair of Ofcom due to the low number of applications that lacked breadth and diversity. In line with the Governance Code and after consultation with the Commissioner for Public Appointment, the Secretary of State therefore

decided to re-run the campaign with a new panel. Further announcements will be made on the new campaign in due course.

■ **Public Libraries: Internet**

Jim Shannon:

[\[19586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support public libraries in the context of increasing use of online reading.

Caroline Dinenage:

Please note that public libraries is a devolved matter.

In England, whilst library buildings were closed or access limited during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a significant rise in the number of people accessing library services online and downloading e-books and e-audiobooks from their library service.

Although absolute numbers of online readers increased, this was from a low base and it is not yet clear whether this will be a permanent shift or drop back. It will be for local councils, as the statutory providers of library services, to consider the needs of local people and communities with regard to future planning for digital library provision.

Total support committed to councils in England to tackle the impacts of Covid-19 is over £12 billion. Over £6 billion of this is unringfenced in recognition that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the Covid-19 pressures in their area, including public libraries.

■ **Sports: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[20597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the extension of covid-19 restrictions beyond 21 June 2021 on live sports venues.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government continues to monitor the data as part of the assessment for easing of restrictions through Step 4 which is expected to commence on the 19th July.

Through Step 3 of the roadmap we have started to see the very welcome return of fans into stadia. The extension of the Events Research Programme also allows for increased capacities at some sporting events in Step 3 such as Wimbledon and some UEFA EURO matches at Wembley.

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

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

■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure

Chi Onwurah: [\[20399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the 2017 changes to the Electronic Communications Code in increasing digital connectivity.

Matt Warman:

The Department has not completed a formal assessment of the impact of the 2017 reforms to the Electronic Communications Code in increasing digital coverage and connectivity. The progress that has been made since the Code reforms came into effect will be due to a wide range of factors and it would not be feasible to conduct an assessment looking exclusively at the impact of the Code.

We have engaged with stakeholders on an ongoing basis since the 2017 reforms came into effect and we are aware that further changes may be needed to support the delivery of coverage and connectivity targets. We have also recently consulted about this through a public consultation which closed on 24 March 2021. Responses to that consultation are being considered and legislative proposals forming part of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill will be laid before this House in due course.

Chi Onwurah: [\[20400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many site owners who lease their land to telecommunications companies for infrastructure have had their rents reduced by more than 40 per cent as proposed by the Government's Impact Assessment accompanying the 2017 Electronic Communications Code.

Chi Onwurah: [\[20404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the proportion of savings made in rent reductions as a result of the 2017 changes to the Electronic Communications Code that have been reinvested into telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas.

Chi Onwurah: [\[21221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of rent reductions resulting from the 2017 changes to the Electronic Communications Code.

Matt Warman:

The Impact Assessment that accompanied the 2017 reforms did not propose a 40% reduction in rents. The 40% figure estimate referred to in the Impact Assessment was drawn from a report by independent economic analysts (Nordicity). The Impact Assessment made clear the difficulty of predicting the exact amount by which rents

would fall, given the fact that the price paid for rights to install digital infrastructure is, in the first instance, a matter for private negotiation between operators and site providers.

Government's aim was to reduce the cost of deployment, including the amounts paid for access to land, overall. We have not completed a formal assessment on average rent reductions since the 2017 reforms came into effect and therefore cannot comment on what the average rent reductions have been.

■ **Travel Agents: Coronavirus**

Neale Hanvey:

[\[16230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions the Government plans to have with representatives of travel agencies on the steps that the Government plans to take to help assist and accelerate the recovery of the travel agencies sector as part of its implementation of the Tourism Recovery Plan.

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.

EDUCATION

■ **Assessments: Coronavirus**

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[20420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason his Department decided that functional skills qualifications should resume based on examination wherever possible while in line with covid-19 public health measures rather than coursework and/or teacher assessed grades as was decided for other qualifications and examinations that would have taken place in summer 2021.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[20421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the decision of April 2021 that functional skills qualifications should resume based on examination wherever possible while in line with covid-19 public health measures rather than using coursework and/or teacher assessed grades, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of that decision on the mental health of students affected, including those wishing to enter further or higher education based on those grades in autumn 2021.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[20422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the decision of April 2021 that assessment by examination should resume wherever possible while in line with covid-19 public health measures for functional skills qualifications (FSQ), what the evidential basis is that those students affected will be as able to receive grades that reflect their ability under normal circumstances; and what comparative assessment his Department has made of the effect of disruption to learning following the covid-19 outbreak on (a) those students studying for FSQs and (b) students studying for (i) vocational training qualifications, (ii) GCSEs and (iii) A Levels.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[21245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department consulted functional skills qualifications professionals prior to taking the decision of April 2021 that functional skills qualifications should resume based on examination wherever possible while in line with covid-19 public health measures rather than using coursework and/or teacher assessed grades.

Gillian Keegan:

The department and Ofqual launched a joint consultation in January 2021, seeking the views of teachers, students, parents, schools and colleges. We set out our proposals on exams and assessments for vocational and technical qualifications, including for Functional Skills qualifications, and the alternative arrangements that would be used where exams do not take place. We also conducted an equality impact assessment as part of the consultation. The majority of respondents agreed that all efforts should be made to allow learners to take a Functional Skills assessment, in line with public health measures or remotely. Where the learner is ready, but assessments cannot take place in centres on public health grounds, teacher assessed grades are available.

As set out in the consultation, the size, structure, assessment, and teaching practices of Functional Skills differ from other qualifications. Many are taken on-demand and by a wide range of learners including 16-19 year olds, adults and apprentices, in a wide range of contexts. Learners will take assessments when they are ready. This approach was designed to give the maximum opportunity to progress in learning or employment, as it allows learners to engage with live exams now or results based on teacher assessment where these are necessary and appropriate.

We recognise the challenges suffered by many students who will feel apprehensive about taking assessments and we are incredibly grateful for the tremendous efforts that teachers have made to continue to provide high quality education throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Awarding organisations have long-established arrangements for mitigating the effect of issues such as those relating to mental health. This year, Ofqual has required awarding organisations to review those arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose. Those students who are able to take assessments but are concerned about the impact of mental health affecting their performance should

speak to their centres and awarding organisation to understand the special consideration process.

Additionally, remote invigilation has offered the opportunity to take assessments at home and some providers have reported that this has helped with anxiety. Together with Ofqual, we have supported the roll out of remote invigilation by awarding organisations to give more options to learners and centres for taking assessments. We have seen an increase in volumes of assessments taken via remote invigilation and also live assessments as settings have re-opened.

The department will monitor and review the impact of disruption to learning in vocational and technical qualifications (including Functional Skills qualifications) and General Qualifications (including GCSEs and A levels).

■ Assessments: Finance

Daisy Cooper:

[\[18595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with exam boards on the appropriate level of rebate which schools and colleges should receive in light of changes to assessments in summer 2021.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[18596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will require exam boards to publish details of the costs they have incurred in the assessment of pupils in summer 2021; and how that amount compares to the amount which has been billed to schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has encouraged examination boards to set their fees appropriately based on the costs involved with alternative arrangements in 2021. The Department worked at pace with Ofqual to provide clarity to examination boards, and the wider sector, on how alternative arrangements to examinations in 2021 would work.

Examination boards are responsible for setting their examination fees. Although examinations did not take place this summer, examination boards are incurring a range of costs as part of their processes that will lead to the awarding of qualifications. Examination boards need to cover these costs, and they will make commercial decisions on fees and refunds on that basis.

Examination boards have stated that they do not intend to profit from any reduction in their costs this year. Statements from individual examination boards can be accessed on their websites. Given the unusual circumstances this year, it is not possible for them to have certainty about their 2021 costs in advance. It is for individual examination boards to publish any details on costings and rebate arrangements.

■ Children: Hearing

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[21194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to promote good hearing health in schools.

Lilian Greenwood:**[21195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that schools educate children and parents on the irreversible harm which can be caused by amplified listening.

Nick Gibb:

Health education became a statutory requirement for state-maintained schools in September 2020. The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, recognise issues in themselves and others and, when issues arise, seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

It is for schools to decide what to teach as part of health education based on the needs of their pupils. The Department's guidance does not stipulate that they should cover the risks of hearing loss, but that they may do so where it is relevant to their pupils.

Pupils are taught about sound as part of the science National Curriculum which is mandatory for all state-maintained schools in England. As part of the programme of study, pupils are taught to understand how sounds are made, how the vibrations that form sound pass through a medium to the ear, and the effect that distance from source has on volume. They also learn about absorption of sound, the auditory range of humans and animals, detection of sound by the eardrum and to understand sound as waves of differing frequencies.

■ Day Care: Mergers and Takeovers**Tulip Siddiq:****[21302]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) mergers and (b) acquisitions have there been in the early years sector in each month since March 2020; and how many childcare providers on the early years register have those mergers and acquisitions involved.

Vicky Ford:

The Department for Education does not hold the information requested.

Ofsted holds the Early Years Register and publishes data on joiners and leavers to that register on a monthly basis. Ofsted does not collect or publish information on the reasons given by early years providers for leaving the Early Years Register. The data on joiners and leavers is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joiners-and-leavers-in-the-childcare-sector>.

According to Ofsted, providers can leave the Early Years register for a range of reasons. In the case of some mergers or acquisitions, nurseries may have to re-register with Ofsted.

The department is in regular contact with local authorities and the early years sector about the supply and demand of childcare in local areas. We will continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the early years sector.

■ Education

Sarah Owen:

[\[21343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Prevent strategy, how often his Department holds discussions with education providers to seek their feedback on the strategy; what form those discussions take; and how participants are selected.

Nick Gibb:

The Department works closely with networks of Government funded Prevent practitioners. This includes Prevent Education Officers, which are employed by local authorities in priority areas, and regional coordinators who support further education colleges and universities.

When required, the Department seeks feedback on specific issues or areas of guidance from a range of stakeholders, such as volunteers identified by practitioners and partner organisations.

The Department also has a public facing helpline for providers if they are concerned about extremism or would like further advice. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-extremism-in-schools-and-childrens-services/preventing-extremism-in-the-education-and-childrens-services-sectors>.

The Government is committed to assessing the effectiveness of the Prevent strategy, which is why it is carrying out an independent review of Prevent. William Shawcross was appointed on 26 January 2021 as the new independent reviewer. The review will look at how effective the statutory Prevent duty is, including through engagement with the education sector, and will make recommendations for the future.

■ Education: Children

Bill Esterson:

[\[21200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans are in place to ensure that children can access a full academic year of school from September 2021 without the need for isolation periods and home schooling.

Sarah Olney:

[\[21317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy that schools are planned to be able to lift all covid-19 restrictions in September 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's goal continues to be supporting children and young people to attend face-to-face education, and to reverse the long-term impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their education, wellbeing and wider development. That is why the Government has prioritised education as it works through the steps of the roadmap to ease restrictions.

As the COVID-19 outbreak progresses, it remains important that the Government is able to respond to the evolving public health situation. Depending on COVID-19

measures in place at the time, and subject to Step 4 of the roadmap commencing on the revised date of 19 July, there may be a need for regional or local safety measures to help limit the spread of COVID-19, which could have an impact on education and childcare in the coming months. The road map is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021#roadmap>.

Given the impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of schools or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible. Any restrictions on attendance should only ever be considered as a last resort and should involve a ministerial decision.

Central Government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission. In enhanced response areas, Directors of Public Health may recommend some additional measures in any schools or nurseries.

These measures are detailed within the contingency framework for education and childcare, which describes how schools and nurseries should plan for spikes in infection in their local areas. This is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings>.

All schools and nurseries should have outbreak management plans outlining how they would operate if any of the measures described within the contingency framework were recommended in their setting or area, and this could include because their area is an enhanced response area.

■ Education: Counter-terrorism

Sarah Owen:

[20549]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Prevent strategy in ensuring equal treatment in education for children from all backgrounds.

Nick Gibb:

Prevent is about safeguarding people who are at risk of radicalisation. Prevent does not target a specific faith or ethnic group; it deals with all forms of extremism.

Protecting pupils from the risk of radicalisation forms part of schools wider safeguarding duties, alongside protecting children from other harms, such as drugs, criminal and sexual exploitation. As with other forms of safeguarding, the aim is to protect and meet the needs of any vulnerable child.

The Department trusts teachers and other school staff to exercise their professional judgment about whether a referral is appropriate, as they do for all other safeguarding

risks. Schools and colleges must follow the public sector Equality Duty and must ensure equal treatment of children from all backgrounds.

The Government is committed to assessing the effectiveness of the strategy and are carrying out an independent review of Prevent. William Shawcross was appointed on 26 January 2021 as the new Independent Reviewer, and the review will look at how effective the statutory Prevent Duty is and will make recommendations for the future.

■ Individual Learning Accounts: Fraud

Katherine Fletcher:

[\[19732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what final estimate his Department made of the amount of money lost to fraud during the Independent Learning Account scheme.

Gillian Keegan:

The Individual Learning Account scheme ceased in 2001 and predates the Education and Skills Funding Agency and its predecessor the Learning and Skills Council. The National Audit Office reported in the Department for Education and Skills Resource Accounts in 2001/02 that the department estimated that £97 million had been subject to improper and fraudulent claims, out of a total scheme spend of £274 million. The cost of fraud and serious irregularities, based on estimates and extrapolations by the department, was estimated to be up to £67 million. In addition, the department estimated that it made irregular payments of £30 million. It is the £67 million and £30 million figures that make up the total estimate of £97 million.

The Department for Education and Skills Resource Accounts in 2001/02 is available to view here: [https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4556/6/HC 316 02.03.pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4556/6/HC_316_02.03.pdf).

■ National Curriculum Tests

Ed Davey:

[\[21139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the More Than A Score report, Drop the SATs for Good, published in 2021, whether he plans to implement any of the recommendations of that report.

Nick Gibb:

Assessment is a crucial part of a child's schooling and fundamental in a high performing education system. Statutory assessments at primary school are an essential part of ensuring that all pupils master the basics of reading, writing and Mathematics to prepare them for secondary school. Assessment data also enables parents, schools, and the Department to understand the impact of lost time in education and recovery initiatives. As such, the Department has no plans to cancel the statutory implementation of the Reception Baseline Assessment in September 2021, and the Department continues to plan for a return to a full programme of primary assessments in the 2021/22 academic year.

In 2017, the Government carried out a consultation into primary assessment in England. The consultation received over 4,000 responses from a diverse range of backgrounds and specialisms, providing a broad and informed range of views that

informed policy on the current primary assessment system. In addition, the Department engages with relevant stakeholders on a regular basis to understand their views on primary assessment.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Kate Green: [\[20392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral contribution of 21 June 2021, Official Report 587, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children that will receive tutoring under the Government's plan in the academic years (a) 2020-21, (b) 2021-22, (c) 2022-23 and (d) 2023-24.

Kate Green: [\[20393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral contribution of 21 June, Official Report 587, what is his planned timeframe for tutoring to have been rolled out to 6 million children.

Kate Green: [\[20394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral contribution of 21 June 2021, Official Report 587, what estimate he has made of the number of tutoring sessions that each of the 6 million children will receive.

Kate Green: [\[20395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral contribution of 21 June 2021, Official Report 587, whether individual children are able to access multiple courses of tutoring across different subjects.

Nick Gibb:

Through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), the Department is investing over £1 billion to deliver up to six million intensive 15 hour tutoring courses for 5 to 16 year olds by 2024.

Schools are best placed to identify which pupils would benefit from tuition, based on the needs of their individual pupils. The Department recognises that each school has pupils with varying needs, so we have developed a tutoring programme that provides a high degree of flexibility and choice. The Department has developed options that make it easier for schools to access tutoring whilst ensuring a high degree of discretion to support the pupils most in need.

The focus of the NTP is on supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium. The Department expects a large proportion of pupils enrolled in the NTP to be eligible for pupil premium. Pupils who have received tuition in academic year 2020/21 will again be eligible in the next academic year 2021/22.

There are three subsidised tutoring options for academic year 2021/22:

- A grant payment to all schools, based on the number of pupil premium students, to support school led tutoring. This payment will be ring-fenced to fund tutoring provision which can be locally sourced by schools.

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

Peter Kyle:

[\[21299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the level of awareness in schools of the National Tutoring Programme.

Nick Gibb:

Since its launch in November 2020, over 230,000 pupils have been enrolled to receive tutoring and over 26,000 tutors are available to support schools. Of those enrolled, over 170,000 pupils have already commenced tutoring.

The Department is on target to offer tuition to 250,000 pupils in this first year.

Through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), the Department is investing over £1 billion to deliver up to 6 million, intensive 15 hour tutoring courses for 5 to 16 year olds by 2024, and the equivalent of 2 million, 15 hour courses for 16 to 19 year olds.

Evidence suggests that pupils who receive a course of small group tutoring can make between three and five months additional progress. The Department has continued to build on this successful engagement through a range of targeted communication activities with schools to increase awareness and continue to encourage pupils to enrol in the programme.

Alongside the NTP website, the programme is featured in regular communications to schools from the Department, and we continue to engage with school leaders, local school networks and national stakeholders to ensure that the NTP continues to reach as many disadvantaged pupils as possible . Communications include key programme updates, information to dispel myths about the programme and sharing evidence for the efficacy of the tutoring model. The Department also gathers and shares case studies of participating schools and successes to illustrate the impact of the programme.

■ **Physical Education and Sports: Mental Health**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[18493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the role that physical education and school sport can play in promoting mental wellbeing among children and young people.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is working with the Department of Health and Social Care to regularly review the latest evidence on children and young people's mental wellbeing, including the impact of physical activity and sport.

Evidence from a number of sources suggests that good quality sporting activity can have a positive impact on children and young people's general wellbeing and mental health. Research by The National Centre for Social Research shows that participating

in organised sports and joining after school clubs can help to improve primary school children's academic performance and social skills.

There is also evidence that organised sporting activity can have a positive effect on personal development and contribute to wellbeing by increasing self-esteem and self-confidence, and improving social skills. Such activity can have a beneficial effect on mental health by reducing anxiety, emotional distress and depressive symptoms.

■ **Physical Education: Disability**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that children with disabilities can participate in physical activity at school.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has provided £900,000 to the Inclusion 2020 programme since 2018, which supports 9,328 schools with continuing professional development to ensure that PE and school sport is inclusive of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This programme funded the development of new teacher resources such as the 'All about Autism, All about Me' digital toolkit, endorsed by the National Autistic Society, which provides support for making PE and sport inclusive to pupils with autism spectrum conditions.

The Department has committed to continue to fund a programme to support children and young people with SEND to take part in PE and school sport. It launched an open competition process last month to select a new programme.

■ **Postgraduate Education: Ethnic Groups**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[20535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the percentage of Black undergraduate students who progress on to postgraduate studies.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[20536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the percentage of Black undergraduate students studying STEM subjects who progress on to postgraduate studies.

Michelle Donelan:

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes data on the outcomes of graduates 15 months after graduating from higher education in the graduate outcomes survey. More information is available here:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/graduates>.

The percentage of undergraduate leavers in the 2017/18 academic year who progressed to postgraduate study in the 15 months[1] after graduation have been provided in the table for each ethnic group.

Undergraduate leavers who progressed to postgraduate study ¹ by ethnicity
Leavers in the academic year 2017/18
English Higher Education Providers

ETHNICITY	UNDERGRADUATE LEAVERS FROM SCIENCE SUBJECTS WHO PROGRESSED TO POSTGRADUATE STUDY ^{2,3}	UNDERGRADUATE LEAVERS WHO PROGRESSED TO POSTGRADUATE STUDY	BASE COUNT OF UNDERGRADUATE LEAVERS ⁴
	(%)	(%)	
White	12.4%	11.4%	135,075
Black	11.0%	11.1%	14,405
Asian	12.4%	11.5%	22,090
Mixed	13.9%	12.1%	7,210
Other	15.2%	14.0%	2,575
Ethnicity not known	10.9%	11.9%	1,615
Total	12.4%	11.5%	182,975

Source: Department for Education analysis of the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey data

Notes:

¹ Percentages refer to undergraduate leavers participating in postgraduate study during the 15-month census week for the survey, or during the interim period since graduating.

² Subject percentages are calculated using full-person-equivalents. Where a student was studying more than one subject, they have been apportioned between the subjects that make up their course.

³ Science subjects have been identified using the HESA methodology, principal subject categories A to K of the JACS3 subject classifications framework are categorised as Science subjects. These can be found here: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/jacs/jacs3-principal>.

⁴ Base counts are the number of UK domiciled undergraduate leavers who responded to the GO survey, and can also be found in Figure 5 of HESA's Open Data: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb257/figure-5>.

[1] Includes leavers participating in postgraduate study during the 15-month census week for the survey, or during the interim period since graduating.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[20359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make a statement on the ways in which early years provision will feature as part of the covid-19 catch-up recovery strategy; and how opportunities for play will be (a) encouraged, (b) supported and (c) facilitated.

Liz Twist: [\[20483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make a statement on the ways in which early years provision will feature as part of the covid-19 catch-up recovery strategy; and how opportunities for play will be (a) encouraged, (b) supported and (c) facilitated.

Vicky Ford:

On 2 June 2021, as part of the government's announcement on providing an additional £1.4 billion for education recovery, we announced a £153 million investment for high-quality professional development for early years practitioners. This includes new programmes focusing on key areas such as speech and language development, and physical and emotional development for the youngest children, of which play is an important part. This is in addition to the £18 million announced in February 2021 and the £9 million announced in June 2020 to support early language development for children in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The package will build on our early years foundation stage reforms, which support more effective early years curriculum and assessment, and reducing unnecessary assessment paperwork, so that practitioners and teachers can spend more time engaging children in rich activities, including through play, to support their learning.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:** [\[20452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number of pupils who were off school and self-isolating as a result of covid-19, on each day of the last two months.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes weekly attendance figures, including the number of children who were off school or self-isolating due to:

- A confirmed case of COVID-19
- A suspected case of COVID-19
- Self-isolating due to potential contact with a case inside the school setting
- Self-isolating due to potential contact with a case outside the school setting
- Their school being closed due to COVID related reasons

The published figures are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

The figures for the past two months can be accessed on the Department's explore education statistics platform using the link provided below:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/d7105dde-f54a-49c4-8975-150b44f277e3>.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[20451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to issue new advice and guidance to secondary schools on managing covid-19 infection rates in response to rising cases.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is working closely with Public Health England to develop and refresh the system of controls which includes cleaning hands thoroughly more often than usual, minimising contact between individuals and keeping occupied spaces well ventilated to reduce the risk of transmission in schools. This guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#system-of-controls>.

Robust testing regimes and this system of controls, when implemented in line with schools' own workplace risk assessment, create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. The Department's advice to schools on the way to control COVID-19 remains the same, even with the current new variants.

Our policy on the 'system of controls' is kept under review and based on the latest scientific and medical advice including in the context of prevalence, new variants and progress of the vaccination programme. We will continue to develop comprehensive guidance and to understand the effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils, students and parents.

In areas where there is a high prevalence of the Delta variant, we are increasing the availability of testing for staff, pupils and families and working with Directors of Public Health to reduce local transmission. On 8 June the Government announced an enhanced support package for any areas affected by local outbreaks. The package includes specialist Rapid Response Teams, surge testing and enhanced contact tracing, support from military personnel, specialist communication, supervised in-school testing and discretion to reintroduce face coverings in communal areas in schools if Directors of Public Health decide it is appropriate. Further information on responding to individual or regional outbreaks can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

■ Schools: Physical Education and Sports

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to maintain funding for physical education and sport in schools at the current level for the 2021-22 academic year.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including physical education and school sport in the recovery plan for education following the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allocating additional funding for physical education and school sport to account for the period during which those activities were restricted during the covid-19 lockdown.

Nick Gibb:

PE and school sport play an important part in supporting pupils to recover from the effects of school closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak. 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. Funding will be allocated according to a formula and details will be confirmed in the autumn as in previous years. Schools will 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.

In June 2021, the Department announced £1.4 billion of additional funding for education recovery. This is in addition to the £1.7 billion already committed, bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3 billion. Schools have the flexibility to determine how they choose to spend some of this funding to support the needs of their pupils, including on activities to support health and wellbeing where needed. The Government has also provided £10.1 million of funding to support schools to reopen their sports facilities and increase the opportunity for children and young people to take part in extra-curricular and community sport.

■ Schools: Sports

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help support local school sport organisers with (a) training, (b) quality assurance and (c) local coordination.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education works with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver the

School Sport and Activity Action Plan which aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity by children and young people.

The Government, through DCMS and Sport England, funds support for school sport through Active Partnerships and a contract with the Youth Sport Trust to provide training and coordination for School Games Organisers based in 450 host schools across the country. Over 95% of schools in England take part in The School Games, which provides an annual calendar of competition at local, regional, and national levels.

The Government has recently confirmed the continuation of £11 million funding for School Games Organisers until the end of this financial year.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Dame Diana Johnson:

[20339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is his Department taking to ensure implementation of statutory relationships and sex education guidance in schools includes factual-based discussion of the full range of contraceptive options.

Nick Gibb:

The Government wants to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe and to equip them for adult life.

From September 2020, relationships education became compulsory for all primary school pupils, relationships and sex education (RSE) became compulsory for all secondary school pupils, and health education became compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools. The statutory guidance sets out that as part of relationships, sex and health education, secondary pupils should be taught about contraception, wellbeing and the key facts about the menstrual cycle. The statutory guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

Under the topic of intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health, secondary school pupils will be taught how the different sexually transmitted infections are transmitted, how risk can be reduced, and the importance of and facts about testing. Pupils should also know how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

The Department is committed to supporting schools to teach the new subjects and has published non-statutory implementation guidance titled 'Plan your Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum', alongside teacher training materials. Both are designed to provide teachers with further clarity and practical advice on how to implement the RSHE curriculum, to help all teachers increase their confidence and quality of teaching. The support is available on a one-stop page for teachers on GOV.UK and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

■ STEM Subjects: Ethnic Groups

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[20531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the educational attainment of Black pupils compared to pupils of other ethnic origins in STEM subjects in (a) Key Stage 1, (b) Key Stage 2, (c) Key Stage 3 and (d) Key stage 4.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[20532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the educational attainment of Black pupils compared to pupils of other ethnic origins in STEM subjects at A-level.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[20533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 lockdowns on the educational attainment of Black pupils in STEM subjects.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[20534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to bridge the educational attainment gap between Black pupils and pupils of other ethnic origins in (a) STEM and (b) other subjects.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes data on the results of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments, including in Mathematics and science, broken down by ethnicity, in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 statistics publications, available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-1> and here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-2#national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2>. Key Stage 3 assessments are no longer carried out. With regard to Key Stage 4, the Department does not publish statistics at this level which show the attainment in science, technology, engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subjects versus all others by ethnicity.

Data is routinely published on the achievement of STEM A level subjects broken down by ethnicity and other student characteristics in the A level and other 16 to 18 results statistical release, available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-attainment-at-19-years#a-levels-and-other-16-to-18-results>.

The Department commissioned research by Renaissance Learning and the Education Policy Institute to understand pupils' progress over the course of the 2020/21 academic year. The research uses assessments from Renaissance Learning which some schools use as part of their usual formative assessment schedule. The research estimates education lost by predicting what pupils would have scored in a normal year using their historic results and compare that against their actual scores.

The Department has looked at the results by Black pupils and pupils belonging to other ethnic groups, but there is not a consistent picture of which ethnic groups have

been worse affected across phases, subjects, and time periods in the study. Small sample sizes make it difficult to draw statistically significant conclusions about differences in impact between ethnic groups based on this study.

The Department has invested over £3 billion since June 2020 to support education recovery for children aged 2 to 19 in schools, colleges, and early years. This will have a material impact in addressing lost education and closing gaps that have emerged. As part of this, we have announced significant investment in reforms which the evidence shows have the biggest impact on pupils' progress: small group tuition and high quality teaching. For example, effective tutoring has been shown to boost catch up education by much as 3 to 5 months at a time.

The Department has committed to an ambitious, long-term education recovery plan and the next stage will include a review of time spent in school and college and the impact this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of the review will be set out later in the year to inform the Spending Review.

Ensuring that anyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to pursue a career in a STEM occupation is a key priority for this Government. The Department has made substantial spending commitments on Mathematics, digital, and technical education to encourage more students into STEM, from primary school to higher education. The demand for STEM skills is growing and improving take up of STEM subjects is vital for the UK's future economic needs and to drive up productivity.

The Department is proud to have rolled out programmes such as the Advanced Maths Support Programme, Stimulating Physics Network, Enthuse bursaries, Teaching for Mastery and Isaac Physics. Together, these programmes will increase STEM support and uptake across all key stages, enhancing the next generation's mathematical and scientific skills on which the STEM sector is underpinned.

Furthermore, programmes such as STEM Ambassadors, where volunteers who are employed in STEM industries engage directly with young people, help broaden pupils' understanding of careers in science and engineering and how they can apply their individual skills and interests to different opportunities.

■ **Students: Housing**

Chi Onwurah:

[21218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 2967, how many students have faced difficulty meeting accommodation costs during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government plays no role in the provision of student residential accommodation. We do not collate or currently hold information pertaining to the number of university students who have faced difficulty meeting accommodation costs.

Universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and are responsible for setting their own rent agreements. Whether a student is entitled to a

refund or to an early release from their contract will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between them and their provider.

This has been a very difficult time for students. We welcome the decision from many universities and accommodation providers to offer rent rebates for students who needed to stay away from their term-time address, and we urge all providers to join them and offer students partial refunds. We encourage universities and private landlords to review their accommodation policies to ensure they are fair, clear and have the interests of students at heart.

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact the crisis will have on some students and we recognise that in these exceptional circumstances some students may face financial hardship. The department has worked with the Office for Students to clarify that providers are able to use existing funds, worth around £256 million for this academic year, towards hardship support. The government has made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Providers have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to their students, in a way that best prioritises those in greatest need. Support can include help for students, including international students and postgraduates, facing additional costs arising from having to maintain accommodation in more than one location or assistance to help students access teaching remotely.

We know that not all students will face financial hardship. The current measures aim to target support for students in greatest need and the government continues to monitor the situation to look at what impact this funding is having.

If students have concerns about their accommodation fees, they should first raise their concerns with their accommodation provider. If their concerns remain unresolved, and their higher education provider is involved in the provision of the accommodation, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint. If a student needs help, organisations such as Citizens Advice offer a free service, providing information and support.

If a student thinks their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found at: <https://www.thesac.org.uk/>, <https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain> and <https://www.rla.org.uk/about/nrla-code-of-practice.shtml>.

■ Students: Loans

Afzal Khan:

[21331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy to introduce an alternative Takaful-based funding structure to interest based student loans.

Michelle Donelan:

I refer the hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton to the answer I gave on 9 June 2021 to Question [10312](#).

■ Turing Scheme: Applications

Rachael Maskell: [\[17782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people have applied for the Turing Scheme for (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

Rachael Maskell: [\[17784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the differences are between the (a) Erasmus scheme and (b) Turing Scheme in respect of student experience.

Rachael Maskell: [\[17786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students from York's universities and colleges have applied for the Turing Scheme for (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

Michelle Donelan:

The Turing Scheme is a £110 million programme providing funding for around 35,000 students and pupils in universities, colleges and schools to study and work abroad during the 2021-22 academic year.

This was a one-year Spending Review, but the government has a clear aim to use this scheme as part of our long-term ambitions for a Global Britain. The impact of the scheme will be kept under review, and future funding arrangements will be subject to the outcomes of the next Spending Review.

The application period for Turing Scheme projects taking place during the 2021-22 academic year has now closed.

We have been pleased with the response to the Turing Scheme and the applications received this year. At this point, it is too early to provide statistics. Applications received are going through a rigorous assessment process. We will provide further updates about applications to the Turing Scheme in due course.

I note that individual students do not apply to the Turing Scheme themselves, rather it is their education provider who will apply for funds. More information for participants on the scheme, including what types of participants are eligible in each educational sector can be found on the scheme's website: <https://www.turing-scheme.org.uk/about/information-for-participants/>.

In relation to the differences between the Turing Scheme and Erasmus+:

- Unlike the Erasmus Scheme, which is mainly EU focused, the Turing Scheme aims to be a truly global programme with every country in the world eligible to partner with UK education settings.
- The Turing Scheme is targeted at all students, particularly the most disadvantaged. While the UK was part of Erasmus, the most privileged were 1.7 times more likely

to benefit from studying abroad. Through the Turing Scheme we are introducing new funding for travel for disadvantaged higher education (HE) students and new funding for travel-related costs like visas, passports and related travel insurance.

- Erasmus+ only provided travel support to participants who travelled to Partner Countries, which was around only 3% of UK participants. With the Turing Scheme, we are introducing funding for travel costs for disadvantaged HE students. Additionally, we are providing funding for visas, passports and related travel insurance.
- As with Erasmus+, we expect tuition fees to be waived by host universities. UK students going abroad for the whole academic year may also continue to qualify for a large contribution made towards their UK tuition fees for the year they are away.

We want the Turing Scheme to address the barriers that prevent some students, particularly those from less advantaged backgrounds, from studying overseas and making life-changing opportunities across the world accessible to everyone studying in the UK. Any student can take part if their education setting meets the criteria, and their provider makes a successful application for funding.

■ Vocational Education: Pilot Schemes

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[19565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applications for the Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazer pilot his Department received by the deadline of 25 May 2021; how many of those applications his Department plans to shortlist and progress; and what his timeframe is for progressing those applications.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department received 40 applications to lead a Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazer as part of the Skills Accelerator programme. It is our intention to select 6 to 8 trailblazers, and the selection process is currently ongoing. We expect to announce the outcome of the competition in July.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[19566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will guarantee that sufficient resources will be allocated to each Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer pilot.

Gillian Keegan:

The department will make available £4 million in the 2021-22 financial year to support the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans as part of the Skills Accelerator programme. As we envisage 6 to 8 trailblazers, this funding will ensure that they have the support they need.

In addition, groups of colleges and providers in the trailblazer areas will have access to the £65 million Strategic Development Fund in order to support the changes needed to better align technical skills provision to the priority skills needs of the local area.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution

Ruth Jones:

[\[16948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the merits of a standalone Clean Air Act.

Rebecca Pow:

In the 2019 Clean Air Strategy we outlined our plans to bring forward new primary legislation on air quality and the Environment Bill delivers on this commitment.

The Bill makes a clear commitment to set a new target for fine particulate matter, the pollutant of most harm to health, alongside at least one further long-term air quality target. It also ensures that local authorities have a clear framework and simple to use powers for tackling air pollution in their areas, and it addresses a crucial regulation gap by providing the Government with new powers to enforce environmental standards for vehicles and non-road mobile machinery.

Alongside this, we have brought forward secondary legislation - the Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuels Standards) Regulations 2020 to phase out the sale of the most polluting fuels starting 1 May 2021, helping to tackle a major source of fine particulate matter emissions in the UK. We have also recently brought forward the Air Quality (Legislative Functions) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which will enable us to keep our Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) legislation up to date with any technical, scientific or international Protocol advances.

Air pollution has reduced significantly since 2010 – emissions of nitrogen oxides are at their lowest level since records began. However, we know that we must continue to work to tackle air pollution. The Environment Bill also establishes a new statutory cycle of monitoring, planning and reporting, which comprises annual reports by the Government to Parliament on progress against targets, including those on air quality, regular scrutiny from the Office for Environmental Protection, and five-yearly reviews and updates of the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). An EIP must set out the steps the Government intends to take to improve the natural environment, which we would expect to include measures needed to meet its long term and interim targets.

■ Animal Experiments

Alex Sobel:

[\[18591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare will reduce the number of animals used in laboratories.

Victoria Prentis:

The Action Plan for Animal Welfare states that we will continue to commit to maintaining high standards of protection where procedures are undertaken on live animals for scientific or educational purposes.

■ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Surrey Hills

Angela Richardson:

[\[16993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans Natural England have to extend the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; what the Government policy is on expanding the AONB designation; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's response to the independent Landscapes Review, made in the Written Ministerial Statement 24 June 2021, contributes to the vision set out in the Government's Ten-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, to start the process for designating more of England's beautiful and iconic landscapes as safeguarding these areas for future generations and bringing more people within closer reach of nature. Two of England's most iconic landscapes, the Yorkshire Wolds and Cheshire Sandstone Ridge, will be considered to become new Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Extensions to the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs are also being considered.

Natural England has statutory responsibility for the designation of areas as AONB under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and will be beginning this work with immediate effect.

The Government will be working closely with our partners over the coming months including local authorities and National Park Authorities, to address the Landscapes Review's recommendations in full and consult on draft proposals later this year.

■ Batteries: Lithium

Chi Onwurah:

[\[21217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of legislation on second-hand lithium battery sales in reducing fires and explosions.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to ensuring there is an effective products safety system so that only safe products can be sold in the UK. We have some of the most robust product safety requirements in the world. Manufacturers and importers must ensure that products are safe before they are placed on the market. They must monitor the safety of their products in use and take action if a safety issue is identified. Enforcement authorities have powers to take measures against manufacturers, importers and distributors of unsafe goods.

Earlier this year, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Office for Product Safety and Standards commissioned Newcastle University to conduct research examining the safety of second life batteries used in domestic energy storage systems. The aim of this work is to understand best practice in the design and installation of domestic battery energy storage systems that use second life

batteries and to provide policy makers a clear understanding of the safety risks to consumers and typical methods used by manufacturers to reduce these risks. The findings will be summarised in a final report published later this year.

■ **Birds of Prey: Urban Areas**

Jim Shannon:

[\[18518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to control the red kite population in urbanised areas.

Rebecca Pow:

The recovery of the red kite is a great conservation success story with the population recovering from just 160 pairs in 1995 to 4,400 pairs in 2019.

Red kites, like all wild birds, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and we have no plans to manage the species. We advise that the public does not feed red kites to avoid them becoming habituated to humans and increasing the risk of human contact.

In exceptional circumstance, and for specific purposes, Natural England has the authority to issue licences for certain activities that would normally be prohibited under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

■ **Fisheries: EU Countries**

John Redwood:

[\[18455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent EU over fishing of UK waters.

Victoria Prentis:

Overfishing in UK waters by vessels of any nationality is an extremely serious matter which endangers the sustainability of our stocks and the long-term interests of the UK fishing fleet. Given that fisheries management is a devolved matter, the four UK fisheries authorities work together to combat overfishing by a range of means. These include: applying scientific data and evidence to fisheries management to ensure sustainable fishing; sharing intelligence and coordinating assets when required through the Joint Maritime Security Centre; significantly increasing the number of onshore personnel and maritime surveillance assets; ensuring that all commercial fishing vessels operating in UK waters are licenced in a way which means that, regardless of nationality, they must all abide by the same regulations as UK vessels; and working closely with counterparts in EU Member States to ensure effective coordination of intelligence-sharing and inspections.

■ **Fisheries: Navy**

John Redwood:

[\[18453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many fishery protection vessels are on patrol in UK waters at any time.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries protection is a devolved matter. Nonetheless, Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive continue to work together to share information and ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement across UK waters. In England, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has significantly increased its maritime surveillance assets dedicated to fisheries protection. This includes two offshore MMO patrol vessels for at-sea surveillance, supplemented by up to 15 vessels from the Royal Navy Overseas Patrol Squadron and Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities.

■ Fisheries: Quotas

Virginia Crosbie: [21362]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the UK fishing quota that is held by EU registered vessels.

Virginia Crosbie: [21363]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many UK registered foreign-owned vessels fished against the UK quota in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

UK fishing quota is not held by EU registered vessels. It is only allocated to UK registered vessels.

We do not keep records of the nationality of UK registered vessel owners.

■ Fisheries: Wales

Virginia Crosbie: [21366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) fishing quota, (b) tonnage and (c) species will be allocated to Wales.

Victoria Prentis:

Full details, including what has been allocated to Wales, have been published on the Marine Management Organisation's website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-quota-allocations-for-2021-for-england-and-the-uk>

■ Fishing Vessels

Virginia Crosbie: [21365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the UK fishing fleet by (a) managing the sustainability of fishing stocks, (b) allocating quota levels and (c) investing in data to support the effective management of fisheries.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is fully committed to the sustainable management of our seas, whilst enabling a successful UK fishing fleet. The objectives in the Fisheries Act 2021 collectively reaffirm our commitment to achieving sustainable fishing and protecting the marine environment while tailoring our approach to our unique seas. This commitment will be delivered through the Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Management Plans.

We set out policy how additional quota would be allocated in March. This is now included in the UK Quota Management Rules for 2021. Quota allocations have taken place and are available on gov.uk here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-quota-allocations-for-2021-for-england-and-the-uk>

The UK has been a strong advocate for the sustainable management of fisheries and will continue to collect data to support this. The regulations that enable us to collect data have been rolled over into UK law and funding has been maintained in line with manifesto commitments. This ensures continuity and consistency of data collection in the short-term. We have now commenced work on developing a new fisheries' monitoring programme that supports UK priorities as well as our international commitments.

■ Fishing Vessels: EU Countries

John Redwood:**[18454]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many inspections of EU vessels fishing in UK waters have been made in the last 12 months.

Victoria Prentis:

The table below provides a breakdown of inspection carried out by the MMO on non-UK vessels in English waters over the last 12 months. Data on inspections in the Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish zones are available from the respective devolved administrations.

MONTH:	NUMBER NON-UK VESSELS INSPECTED
Jun 2020	0
Jul 2020	8
Aug 2020	9
Sep 2020	13
Oct 2020	14
Nov 2020	16
Dec 2020	15

MONTH:	NUMBER NON-UK VESSELS INSPECTED
Jan 2021	0
Feb 2021	0
Mar 2021	41
Apr 2021	31
May 2021	24

During the national lockdowns introduced in response to the coronavirus pandemic, inspections at sea were reduced to promote public safety. During this period, when fishing activity was reduced due to weather and the reduced markets for fish, only high-risk vessels would have been inspected at sea, although shore based inspections continued as usual. When infection levels reduced in March this year, inspections resumed at a higher level than ever.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Tunnels**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[20314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it the policy of the Government to instruct the Environment Agency to install a comprehensive inspection regime for HS2 tunnelling operations beneath the Misbourne Valley; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency has worked with HS2 Ltd to agree a sufficient monitoring system operated by HS2 Ltd and its contractors to manage the risks posed by the tunnelling operations in the Misbourne Valley. The Environment Agency regularly checks compliance with approvals or permits issued for the construction of High Speed Two along the length of the Phase One route.

■ **Merchant Shipping Act 1988**

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[21364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of restoring the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988.

Victoria Prentis:

Restoring the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act would be inconsistent with wider government policy which welcomes foreign investment in UK industry. Our investment commitments under the UK / EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement reflect this policy.

We believe that ensuring all vessels over 10 metres in length that land more than 2 tonnes of per annum and are fishing against English quota demonstrate a link to the UK would provide a stronger benefit to the UK economy. We consulted on proposals to strengthen the economic link licence condition for English vessels last year and intend to publish the government response this summer.

■ **School Milk: EU Grants and Loans**

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[16868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to publish a domestic replacement for the EU School Milk Scheme for the academic year 2021-22.

Victoria Prentis:

The School Milk Scheme will continue to run in the 2021-22 academic year.

■ **Sewage: Pollution Control**

Grahame Morris:

[\[21187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to end sewage discharges into bathing waters by 2030.

Rebecca Pow:

Over £2.5 billion has been invested by English water companies to improve bathing water quality since privatisation. In the early 1990s, just 28 per cent of bathing waters met the highest standards in force at that time. By 2019 this had gone up to 98.3% of bathing waters in England passing the minimum standard. Of these, 72% of bathing waters were classified as 'Excellent' - the highest water quality standard.

Tackling sewage discharges into all our waters, including bathing waters is one of my priorities. I set up the Storm Overflows Taskforce, which brings together Government, the water industry, regulators and environmental NGOs. This Taskforce has now agreed to a long-term goal to eliminate harm from storm overflows.

Between 2020 and 2025, water companies will invest £3.1 billion in storm overflow improvements. This includes £1.9 billion investment on the Thames Tideway Tunnel super sewer, as well as £1.2 billion of other investment throughout England. £143 million of this is new, additional investment as a result of a call to action from the Storm Overflows Taskforce.

I recognise there is more to be done. On 8 June 2021 the Government tabled amendments to the Environment Bill to introduce measures on storm overflows. These measures complement the ongoing work of the Storm Overflows Taskforce by implementing a statutory requirement for the Government to produce a plan to reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows by September 2022 and to report progress to Parliament on implementing that plan.

We are also introducing duties requiring water companies and the Environment Agency to publish data on storm overflow operations on an annual basis. These

legally-binding obligations on water companies and government will help to reduce pollution in rivers - protecting wildlife and public health.

Water companies are for the first time currently producing comprehensive Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans to assess the capacity of their wastewater networks. We are also taking steps through the Environment Bill to require water companies to produce such Plans on a statutory basis. These plans will be another tool to help address the risks that storm overflows pose to the environment.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Albania: Elections

John Howell:

[\[21176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the elections in Albania of April 2021 following the observations made at the Council of Europe on 21 June 2021.

Wendy Morton:

UK policy on Albania aims to help the country to become a strong, prosperous, mature democracy, better able to tackle the challenges it faces including the threat from Serious and Organised Crime. Our policy supports the wider objectives set out in the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy published in March 2021. The UK continues to work closely with the international community, including the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR), in support of these aims. We continue to encourage Albania to engage constructively to further improve the country's electoral practices in line with recommendations from the CoE and ODIHR.

■ Armed Conflict: Children

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[21243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict; and what steps the Government is taking to hold perpetrators of grave violations against children to account.

James Cleverly:

The UK is an active member of the United Nations Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), which leads the international response to the use of child soldiers and child protection. This includes pressing those parties to conflict listed in the UN Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC, to enter into concrete action plans with the UN to verify and release any child soldiers associated with armed groups and forces and to prevent re-recruitment. We apply diplomatic pressure to

listed governments and armed groups, and fund projects to help protect and rehabilitate vulnerable children.

Protecting children in conflict builds on our work to support lasting political settlements, create resilient and accountable institutions of security and justice, and help international and regional organisations to prevent and resolve conflict. Failing to protect children affects a country's ability to emerge from conflict, undermining the prospects of future generations and the potential of tomorrow's leaders.

■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[21160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2021 to Question 10405, whether the Government has taken steps to verify the Government of Bahrain's assurances that medical care is provided to inmates of Jau Prison in accordance with the constitution of Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the assurances that any prisoner who falls ill has the same free access to treatment and care as any other citizen or resident in the Kingdom, and assess that that is reinforced by, for example, the absence - with one exception - of Covid-related deaths in prison. The British Ambassador and other international representatives visited Jau prison on 3 May to see the medical facilities available. We continue to monitor conditions including through our regular contact with the oversight bodies, with which we discuss health and covid-19 in prisons and which actively monitor the Covid-19 situation through inspection visits (NIHR and PDRC) and investigations into prison conditions (Ombudsman). We encourage anyone with concerns about medical treatment in prison to get in touch with the oversight bodies directly

■ Bahrain: Prisoners' Release

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[21159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the risk posed by covid-19 to prisoners in Bahrain, if he will make urgent representations to his Bahraini counterpart for the immediate release of vulnerable political prisoners with pre-existing medical conditions in that country, including (a) Hasan Mushaima, (b) Abdulhadi AlKhawaja, (c) Sheikh Ali Salman, (d) Dr Abduljalil AlSingace, (e) Abduljalil AlMuqdad and (f) Abdulwahab Husain.

James Cleverly:

We regularly discuss the challenges of managing Covid-19 in prisons with senior members of the Bahraini Government, which we assess to be dealing with it effectively and in line with international norms via vaccination and other protocols. Nevertheless we continue to raise the cases of specific individuals with senior interlocutors, as well as with the independent human rights oversight bodies. We

encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to raise the matter with these oversight bodies.

■ **British Council: Closures**

Lisa Nandy: [\[20601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has of the potential effect of closing British Council overseas offices on the (a) UK's soft power capabilities and the (b) Government's Global Britain agenda.

Nigel Adams:

Despite the difficult financial situation, we have increased funding to the British Council by 27% this year, to £189 million. We have provided loans of up to £245 million to support them through the pandemic.

The British Council will also need to change to make the most impact in a changing world - especially in digitising its operations. We continue to support its leading role in promoting the English language and UK arts, culture and education in more than 100 countries.

■ **Bulgaria: Elections**

John Howell: [\[21175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the elections in Bulgaria of April 2021 following the observations made at the Council of Europe on 21 June 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The UK commends the people and Government of Bulgaria on the successful conduct of parliamentary elections on 4 April, despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. As set out in the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy published in March, the UK aims to support Bulgaria in defending common values such as democracy and counter shared threats including from Serious and Organised Crime. The UK continues to work closely with the international community, including the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR), in support of these aims. HM Ambassador to Sofia met members of the OSCE election observation mission during their visit to Sofia earlier this year and will engage with the OSCE ODIHR and Bulgarian authorities concerning preparations for upcoming parliamentary elections on July 11, including on issues identified in the CoE's observations. We continue to encourage Bulgaria to engage constructively to further improve its electoral practices in line with recommendations from the CoE and OSCE ODIHR.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

John Redwood:

[\[18457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is the Government's policy that the supply of free covid-19 vaccines to qualifying countries will be counted as part of UK aid contributions at the cost valuation of provision.

Wendy Morton:

Donations of the UK's surpluses to developing countries will be classified as Official Development Assistance (ODA), in line with the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) rules on ODA. There are ongoing discussions at the OECD DAC about how donors should value the donation of vaccine doses.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[20471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to accelerate the rollout of the 100 million covid-19 vaccine doses the UK has committed to donating to the rest of the world.

Wendy Morton:

Our G7 Presidency championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics and we will share 100 million doses within the next year, 30 million of those by the end of 2021 with 5 million doses shared by the end of September. 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.

80% of the vaccines shared will go to COVAX, the multilateral mechanism set up to support international co-operation on vaccines, COVAX remains best-placed to allocate vaccines to where they will be most effective. This was part of an agreement with G7 partners to share at least 870 million doses over the next year, primarily through COVAX, which has so far helped deliver over 81m doses to 129 countries and territories.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[20482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15349 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the world's population that will be vaccinated once the 870 million doses have been shared by the G7.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is proud that our G7 Presidency secured agreement from leaders to commit to share at least 870 million doses over the next year, which includes a commitment from the UK to share 100 million doses over the next year. This agreement represents a significant contribution by the G7 to our shared ambition to vaccinate the world by the end of 2022.

Progress on global vaccination rates will be dependent on a variety of factors in addition to these dose sharing commitments. These include: funding to COVAX and progress with its vaccine roll-out; working with manufacturers to increase supply; supporting in-country delivery systems; supporting community mobilisation and vaccine confidence and developing more sustainable approaches to financing vaccines and their delivery. We are working closely with international partners, including the G7, on efforts to address these bottlenecks to support the ambitions goals agreed by the G7.

■ Corruption

Lisa Nandy: [\[20391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to tackle global corruption.

Nigel Adams:

Tackling global corruption is a top priority for FCDO, as set out in the Foreign Secretary's recent speech at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Corruption. Our new Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime, launched in April 2020 to prevent and combat corruption, allows the Government to impose travel bans and asset freezes on corrupt individuals and their enablers around the world. In our first tranche of designations we targeted 22 individuals from six countries - and more will follow. From our Official Development Assistance budget we continue to support the National Crime Agency's International Corruption Unit, which has restrained, recovered or returned over £300 million of assets stolen from developing countries since 2018. We are championing beneficial ownership transparency as a key anti-corruption initiative: promoting it in our G7 Presidency; and supporting all inhabited Overseas Territories to implement their commitments to publicly accessible registers, publishing a draft Order in Council setting out the Government's minimum requirements in this regard. In addition we have committed new resources to support independent media and investigative journalists, who play such a vital role exposing corruption in countries around the world.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[20481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of covid-19 vaccination coverage in (a) low income and (b) lower middle income countries.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to supporting low and lower middle-income countries to increase their access to vaccines. The UK is proud to be among the largest donors to COVAX, which aims to provide doses equivalent to up to 30% population in low and lower middle-income countries by early 2022. COVAX raised an additional \$2.6bn at an event hosted by Japan on 2 June that will allow it to secure purchase agreements for vaccine doses to meet this target.

The Prime Minister has also announced the UK will donate 100 million COVID-19 vaccine doses over the next year, 80% of which will go to COVAX to further support countries in need. This was part of the wider G7 commitment to share and finance an additional 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses over the next year to increase coverage in low and lower-middle-income countries.

■ Developing Countries: Drugs

Claire Hanna:

[\[19731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that reductions in the foreign aid budget do not prevent the (a) distribution and (b) administration of lifesaving drugs in developing countries.

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.

■ Developing Countries: Remittances

Layla Moran:

[\[18567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK is on target to reach UN Sustainable Development Goal 10C of reducing the transaction costs of migrant remittances to less than three per cent by 2030.

Nigel Adams:

Since 2017, the cost of sending remittances from the UK decreased by 1 percentage points, from 7.43% in 2017 to 6.44% in Q4 2020, according to World Bank Group data. Transfer costs vary considerably depending on the recipient country and payment instrument. For example, the cost of sending £120 from the UK by bank account transfer or via debit/credit card was half (4.88%) of the cost of using cash (9.54%) in 2020.

There remain significant barriers to reaching the global SDG target by 2030, including a lack of access to suitable banking services for senders, receivers and Money Transfer Operators, a preference for cash transfers over digital, insufficient price transparency, and illicit finance concerns. The UK's collaborative work across Government and internationally is designed to address constraints both here and in recipient countries.

Layla Moran:

[\[18568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Blueprint for Action report entitled Remittances in crisis: Response Recovery Resilience, published November 2020, what discussions he had at the G7 on the recommendation that financial institutions should increase access to clear information on the total costs of sending and receiving remittances.

Nigel Adams:

The Secretary of State covered many pressing areas in his discussions with counterparts during the G7 Leaders' Summit and G7 Foreign and Development Ministerial meetings (including on vaccines, climate, girls' education, and open societies).

The G7 Foreign and Development Ministers agreed to take concrete actions to address priority development finance challenges in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (which covers remittances). Remittances is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 10.c which aims to reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent by 2030.

Layla Moran:

[\[18569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of taking steps to reduce international remittance costs to support developing countries; and if he will set out a roadmap for reducing those costs in line with the UK's ambitions to reach UN Sustainable Development Goal 10C by 2030.

Nigel Adams:

Remittances present a major opportunity for the UK to build strong, effective partnerships with developing countries, help poor people avoid falling further into poverty, and enable migrant incomes to be used productively. International Fund for Agricultural Development estimates that 75 percent of remittances go towards subsistence and of the remaining 25 percent (or £72 billion per year), 10 percent is spent on human capital investments like education and health, and 15 percent on savings and investments in housing, small assets, and other income-generating activities.

FCDO recognises the importance of international remittances and is committed to reducing the associated costs and barriers to ensure that transfers are cheaper, more accessible, and more secure, in line with G20 and SDG targets. The UK's Action

Plan, which we agreed to through the G20's Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII), focusses on improving the environment for remittances in the following areas:

- Increase remittance market competitiveness, including through improvements to the regulatory environment;
- Improve financial system infrastructure and pursue policies conducive to harnessing emerging technologies; and
- Improve transparency and consumer protection of remittance transfer services.

■ Gender Equality Advisory Council

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[20480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16916 on Gender Equality Advisory Council, which of the recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council 2021 he plans to implement.

Wendy Morton:

G7 Leaders thanked the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) for bringing fresh ideas on gender equality to the G7. I thank the Minister for Women and Equalities for her hard work in ensuring that this vital agenda is placed at the centre of G7 activity.

The GEAC proposed numerous and wide-ranging recommendations. G7 Foreign and Development Ministers have committed to drive progress on 12 years of gender-transformative girls' education, and to generate greater economic opportunities for women through the 2X Challenge, which is leveraging \$15 billion in development finance to help women in developing countries access jobs, build resilient businesses and respond to the impacts of COVID-19. The G7 Foreign & Development Track will take forward the GEAC recommendation, endorsed in the G7 Leaders' communiqué, for Foreign and Development ministers to consider how best to strengthen international architecture around conflict-related sexual violence. Building on G7 commitments, the UK is galvanising action to end violence against women and girls, through increased investment in prevention and response as co-leads of the Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition for the Generation Equality Forum. As COP President, the UK will advance action on gender-responsive climate financing and call for a green, inclusive and resilient COVID-19 recovery.

■ Hong Kong: Sanctions

Lisa Nandy:

[\[20602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has plans to extend Magnitsky-style sanctions to Chief Executive Carrie Lam for alleged suppression of freedom and democratic processes in Hong Kong.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights and freedoms and the high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. It is crystal clear that the powers under the National Security Law are being used as a tool to curtail freedoms and punish dissent, rather than keep public order.

We do not speculate on who may be designated under the UK's sanctions regime in the future, but sanctions are just one tool in our arsenal. The UK has already taken a number of actions in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new bespoke immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) (BNOs), suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong indefinitely, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

We will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong as befits our historic commitment to them, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms.

■ Hungary: Council of Europe**John Howell:**[\[21177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the aims of the Hungarian Government as the new chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Wendy Morton:

Hungary took over the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 21 May, taking over from Germany as the previous chair. Hungary set out its priorities for the Chairmanship on 19 May, including interreligious dialogue and technological challenges.

The UK is committed to freedom of religion or belief, and we hope to work with Hungary on interreligious dialogue to strengthen mutual respect, understanding and tolerance in Europe. The UK supports the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, which will celebrate its 20th anniversary in November. We welcome Hungary's proposal to hold a conference of the member States' Ministers of Justice in Budapest in October to discuss justice in the digital age and tackling cybercrime.

We welcome Hungary's commitment to further promote and strengthen human rights, democratic values and the rule of law during their Chairmanship. The UK is committed to the Council of Europe, and it is important that the institution continues its focus on these core values. It is vital that member States uphold their obligations as members of the Council of Europe, and we expect that Hungary will continue Germany's strong lead on this.

■ India: Religious Freedom

Sarah Owen:

[\[21345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the protection of religious minorities in that country.

Nigel Adams:

Human rights form a regular part of our dialogue with India. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia, discussed the situation for Christians in India with India's Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kishan Reddy, on 15 March. Our Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi also discussed UK Parliamentary interest in minorities in India with officials from India's Ministry of External Affairs on 5 January. A senior FCDO official discussed the situation for India's religious minorities with the Indian High Commissioner on 29 December 2020.

The British High Commission in New Delhi regularly meets religious representatives and has run projects promoting minority rights. This year, they supported an interfaith leadership programme for a cohort of emerging Indian faith leaders, including Christians and Muslims, creating an opportunity to exchange expertise on leading modern, inclusive faith communities, and promoting values of tolerance and multi-culturalism.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Dan Carden:

[\[20494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the (a) number of incidents of attacks on Palestinian healthcare facilities by Israeli forces in April and May 2021 and (b) number of investigations opened into those incidents by Israel.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May, which is an important step to ending the cycle of violence and loss of civilian life. The UK priority now is ensuring timely humanitarian access into and out of Gaza, including for essential health services. We are urging the Government of Israel to ensure this access is maintained. We have made clear our concern about the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza, including significant damage and destruction of civilian infrastructure including homes, schools, hospitals, and clinics.

The United Kingdom has also provided an initial £3.2 million of UK aid to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, which launched on 19 May 2021. This appeal is helping to address the immediate humanitarian needs of vulnerable Palestinians living in Gaza.

■ Jerusalem: Demonstrations

Afzal Khan:

[\[20507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the recent Israeli right-wing march through Jerusalem; and if he will make representations to the Israeli Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, on that matter.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to violence, including the use of racist, hateful or anti-Palestinian language and any actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for peace.

■ Jerusalem: Palestinians

Afzal Khan:

[\[20508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports of Israeli security forces attacking Palestinian protesters in Sheikh Jarrah; and what steps the Government is taking towards a peace process that is (a) based on human rights and equality and (b) rooted in international law.

James Cleverly:

On 8 May Minister Cleverly publicly expressed concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions permanently. UK Officials at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv continue to raise the issue regularly with the Israeli Authorities.

The UK continues to engage with the Israeli government on human rights issues in the context of the occupation. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We urge the Israeli government to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of peaceful, legal protestors. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

■ LGBT People

Crispin Blunt:

[\[21125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to make public statements condemning attacks by public authorities wherever they occur on LGBTI defenders.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's approach to making public statements in cases of attacks on LGBT+ defenders is always informed by advice from civil society groups on the ground. Our first principle is always that we should "do no harm" and we seek advice from local LGBT+ Civil Society Organisations to ensure that our interventions are of genuine benefit to LGBT+ communities. Some interventions are therefore not public but are made privately.

■ Myanmar: Arms Trade

Lisa Nandy:

[\[20603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he is making to his international counterparts on securing a comprehensive arms embargo against Myanmar.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is a longstanding supporter of an arms embargo on Myanmar. We are clear that no one should sell arms to Myanmar. The UK worked to secure a strong G7 statement on the 3 and 23 February urging all countries to immediately suspend arms sales to Myanmar. On 5 May, the UK secured a G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting Communiqué that committed G7 members to continue to prevent the supply of arms and technical assistance to the military. The G7 Leaders' Communiqué of 13 June reaffirmed G7 unity on pursuing additional measures should they prove necessary. On 18 June, the UK worked with partners to deliver a UN General Assembly Resolution which urged member states to prevent the flow of arms to Myanmar. We will continue to work closely with partners and through multilateral institutions, such as the UN Security Council, to apply pressure directly on those who sell arms to the military.

■ Myanmar: Humanitarian Aid

Carol Monaghan:

[\[21258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the humanitarian needs of people living in Myanmar are addressed, including access to food and shelter.

Nigel Adams:

The humanitarian situation in Myanmar is extremely serious. Displacement and humanitarian needs are increasing, and the military junta is blocking humanitarian deliveries to some places in the southeast and west of Myanmar. We are increasingly working through small scale local civil society organisations which are able to

mobilise community support and reach places the UN and international humanitarian community cannot access.

Through our humanitarian mechanism we provide the most vulnerable populations in Myanmar with access to essential services: water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, food, healthcare and shelter materials. The UK has on average provided around 14% of all humanitarian assistance through the UN's Humanitarian Response Plan, 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.

■ Myanmar: Overseas Aid

Rushanara Ali: [\[18521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the allocated aid budget for Myanmar is for 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

Following a thorough review, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's (FCDO) aid budget has been allocated in accordance with UK strategic priorities against the challenging financial climate of COVID-19. FCDO programme managers are currently working with their suppliers and delivery partners to determine the precise allocations for each programme. Each country's full budget will be published in due course, including in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts, and in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' publication.

The portfolio agreed by the Foreign Secretary will focus our investment and expertise on issues where the UK can make the most difference, and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. We remain a world-leading aid donor, and across HMG, will spend more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty, tackle climate change, and improve global health.

■ Nigeria: Human Rights

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[20470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on what date he last met with his Nigerian counterpart to discuss reports of human rights abuses in that country.

James Duddridge:

We regularly raise the importance of human rights with the Nigerian authorities. During my visit to Nigeria in April I met the Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama, the President's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, as well as community leaders, to discuss insecurity across the country and the importance of protecting the human rights of all Nigerians. In May, I discussed Nigeria's security situation with the Nigerian High Commissioner to the UK.

In my meetings with the President's Chief of Staff and the Governor of Lagos, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, I also discussed the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria in October

2020, and I stressed the importance of the police and military's cooperation with the judicial panels of inquiry, which are investigating reports of police and security service brutality. We will continue to stress the importance of protecting civilians and their human rights in our engagements with the Nigerian Government.

■ Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[20479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16918 on Overseas Aid, how many round four projects were approved; and what the total value of funding is that has been deferred until 2022.

Nigel Adams:

Sixteen projects were approved for funding through UK Aid Match Round Four. We estimate that the total funding, that has been deferred until 2022, is £3.9 million. The exact figure will be known when all of the amounts raised through the charity appeals (some of which are ongoing) have been certified. All UK Aid Match projects have been protected despite the difficult fiscal situation we face this year, and all 16 organisations have been provided with additional assurance that the FCDO will still be matching their fundraising appeal pound for pound.

■ Palestinians: Schools

Steve McCabe:

[\[20318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has a copy of the report on the Palestinian curriculum by the Georg Eckert Institute.

Steve McCabe:

[\[20319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the findings of the report on the Palestinian curriculum by the Georg Eckert Institute have been shared with stakeholders.

James Cleverly:

The Georg Eckert Institute, who were commissioned by the EU to undertake a review into Palestinian textbooks published the final report on 18 June 2021. The review is publicly accessible on their website: <http://www.gei.de/en/departments/knowledge-in-transition/analysis-of-palestinian-textbooks-paltex.html>

■ Politicians: Prosecutions

John Howell:

[\[21178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make an assessment for the implications for his policies of the debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 21 June 2021 on whether politicians should be prosecuted for statements made in the exercise of their mandates.

James Cleverly:

The UK supports freedom of expression as both a human right in and of itself and as an essential element for the enjoyment of the full range of other human rights. We have a long history of promoting freedom of expression globally, including through our commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights. Freedom of expression is an essential quality of any functioning democracy; people must be allowed to discuss and debate issues freely, to challenge their governments, and to make informed decisions. HMG is committed to continuing championing these values, and recognises the crucial work of the Council of Europe and in particular the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in this sphere, noting that the resolution and recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

■ Qatar: Syria

Kenny MacAskill: [\[21341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the establishment of a new joint Royal Air Force and Qatari air force squadron, what assessment he has made of the extent of Qatar's support to al-Nusrah Front in Syria.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[21342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the establishment of a new joint Royal Air Force and Qatari air force squadron, what assessment he has made of the extent of Qatar's support to Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza.

James Cleverly:

We have not made a recent assessment of this. All relevant considerations were taken into account when deciding to establish joint squadrons with Qatar. The long-standing friendship between the UK and Qatar is more important than ever. With shared defence and security interests, it is vital we work together for both regional and global stability.

■ Rohingya: Children

Carol Monaghan: [\[21259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that international non-governmental organisations working across all 34 camps in Cox's Bazar can facilitate access to education for Rohingya Children using the Myanmar Curriculum.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government, principally through the British High Commission in Dhaka, has regularly engaged with the Government of Bangladesh authorities in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar on the need to allow humanitarian agencies unhindered access to the

camps to provide protection and critical assistance, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government of Bangladesh agreed in 2020 to ensure Rohingya children had access to the Myanmar curriculum. Since then the COVID-19 crisis has forced the closure of all learning centres in the camps. Education partners have tried to ensure continuity of learning, for example by providing caregivers with learning materials. We hope learning centres will re-open soon, with measures in place to ensure the safety of pupils and teachers. This includes piloting the Myanmar curriculum. We continue to stress the importance of providing education and livelihood opportunities for the Rohingya refugees for their well-being and to prepare for their voluntary, safe and dignified return to Myanmar when the conditions are right.

■ **Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates: Children**

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[21244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the UN Secretary-General on the omission of the Saudi and Emirati-led Coalition in the UN Secretary-General's annual list of perpetrators of grave violations against children.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to call on the UN Secretary-General for greater transparency on listing decisions. The UK is firmly committed to ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers and to protecting all children affected by armed conflict. We use our permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) membership to ensure conflict-related child protection issues remain a key part of UNSC discussions and that UN operations address child protection issues. The UK condemns in the strongest terms all grave violations and abuses committed against children in Yemen, and we urge the parties to the conflict to uphold their human rights obligations under applicable international law.

■ **Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[19563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the execution of child defendant Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 15 June 2021, if he will (a) condemn that execution, (b) call for an end to the use of the death penalty for childhood crimes and (c) call for the death sentences of Abdullah al-Howaiti and the eight other young men facing execution for childhood crimes to be commuted.

James Cleverly:

The United Kingdom strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. The Saudi authorities are aware of the UK Government's strong position on such cases. We reiterated our opposition to the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council on

15 September 2020. On 24 May 2021, during my visit to Saudi Arabia, I [Minister Cleverly] discussed the death penalty, including those charged with conducting crimes as minors, with the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, Dr Awwad Alawwad. The British Embassy Riyadh continues to raise individual cases, including the possible execution of Abdullah al Howaiti, with the Saudi authorities.

■ Sri Lanka: Water Supply

Fleur Anderson:

[\[21347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken with international partners to improve the supply of clean water for (a) human consumption, (b) agriculture and (c) sanitation in Sri Lanka.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is aware of the challenges Sri Lanka faces around water management and quality and the unique challenges faced by communities in Northern Sri Lanka. Staff at the British High Commission in Colombo raised the issue of water quality during a visit to the North in July 2020. The Minister of State for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, also discussed this issue with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to the UK in December 2020.

A number of public bodies in Sri Lanka, including the national water supply and drainage board, have conducted tests and compensation has been offered to those affected by water pollution caused by the Chunnakam Power plant. Staff at the British High Commission in Colombo discussed this issue in May 2021 with a contact in Jaffna, and we understand that in March 2021 discussions took place with the Northern Provincial Council that also involved further testing.

We will continue to engage with the relevant authorities in Sri Lanka in support of clean water provision.

■ Sub-Saharan Africa: Drinking Water

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[20324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of progress in delivering the Sustainable Development Goal on the supply of clean drinking water in countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

James Duddridge:

The Joint Monitoring Programme (hosted by the World Health Organization and United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund) is the global monitoring mechanism that tracks progress against the water supply and sanitation targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Joint Monitoring Programme's most recent update concludes that since 2000, the proportion of the population of sub-Saharan Africa using safely managed drinking water supplies has risen from 18% to 27%. By comparison, the global estimate is 71%, indicating that more needs to be done. Less progress has been made on sanitation. Access to safely managed sanitation services has only increased from 15% to 18% since 2000. For both water supply and

sanitation, progress is slower in rural areas compared to urban areas. The Joint Monitoring Programme also reports differences in coverage between the better-off and poorest households and regions within countries.

Between 2015 and 2020 the UK supported 62.6 million people to gain access to basic water and sanitation services. Africa was the largest beneficiary of our water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes, with 26.3 million beneficiaries reached and we targeted some of the poorest communities in Africa. Our support to the region will continue by helping governments deliver reliable and climate resilient water and sanitation services that can reach the poorest households.

■ Sudan: Armed Conflict

Dawn Butler:

[\[18499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessments his Department has made of the developing situation in Sudan; and what support the Government is providing to support civilians caught in conflict in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK welcomes the commitment of the Sudanese Government to secure a lasting end to conflict as part of the country's transition to democracy. This includes thorough implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, signed with a number of opposition groups in October 2020. We also welcome the Sudanese Government's commitment that it will assume full responsibility for the protection of civilians, and their recent announcement of the formation of a joint security force to help provide such protection. We are however concerned by continued incidents of intercommunal violence in Sudan, including in Darfur. We continue to urge all parties to implement the Juba Peace Agreement in full and urge non-signatory groups to engage in dialogue. On 8 June, representatives of the UK, Norway and the US (the Troika) signed the Juba Peace Agreement as Witnesses, as a sign of support to the peace process.

The UK is taking a leading role in working with Sudan to help ensure the democratic transition and peace process is a success. On 21 January, the Foreign Secretary visited Sudan and reaffirmed this commitment. Most recently, on 21 June I spoke with Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr al-Sadiq al-Mahdi to discuss UK work with the Sudanese Government on their transitional priorities. Our support includes £80m to assist the Sudanese Government's economic reforms, which are vital to stability. It also includes a £148m bridging loan to clear arrears at the African Development Bank, to help Sudan achieve comprehensive debt relief. We have also worked to build international support for Sudan through the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) which is mandated to assist the Sudanese Government with peace agreement implementation and protection of civilians.

■ Tropical Diseases: Drugs**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[20478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16917 on Tropical Diseases: Drugs, what steps he has taken to limit the possibility that any of the 24 recipient countries will have undistributed medicines.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO is currently working with implementing partners, drug companies, donors and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to identify critical and immediate activities that we are able to fund and to manage exit from the ASCEND programme. It is not possible at this stage to say if any of the 24 recipient countries will face disruptions to delivery of medicines. We are, however, communicating with Ministries of Health and national Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) programmes to consider where gaps can be covered and prioritise activities. We are also continuing to distribute drugs to fight NTDs and perform surgeries in the most urgent cases.

Global health remains a top priority for UK Official Development Assistance (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.

■ Western Sahara: Morocco**Alex Sobel:** [\[18577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of whether Morocco's annexation of Western Sahara a breach of international law.

Alex Sobel: [\[18578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the transfer of Moroccan citizens into occupied Western Sahara is a breach of the Geneva conventions.

James Cleverly:

As the Foreign Secretary stated on 11 December 2020, the UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined. We support UN-led efforts to achieve a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Air Pollution: Coronavirus

Ben Bradley:

[\[19670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 12283 on Air Pollution: Coronavirus, whether his Department has plans to make an assessment of the ability of photohydroionization technology to prevent covid-19 transmission via aerosol and water droplets.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans to do so.

■ Baby Care Units

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[19637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of neonatal services are providing (a) unrestricted 24 hour access for both parents, (b) 24 hour access for both parents but with restrictions on how long parents can be present together, (c) 24 hour access for one parent and (d) time-limited access for both parents.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[19638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of neonatal services are unable to allow parents to be present together for (a) any length of time, (b) four hours or less, (c) 8 hours or less and (d) 12 hours or less.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Baby Care Units: Coronavirus

David Linden:

[\[20487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to use maternity situation report data to support NHS trusts to facilitate full parental access to their babies on neonatal units.

David Linden:

[\[20488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the data collected through maternity situation reports, what progress his Department has made in ensuring parents have unrestricted access to their babies on neonatal units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked closely with trusts to adopt the actions set out in updated guidance 'Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic' to remove barriers which prevent trusts being able to facilitate full parental presence in neonatal units. NHS England and NHS Improvement are assured that 100% of trusts report they are actively using the guidance.

■ Cancer: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[\[18519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the speed of cancer diagnosis during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are increasing diagnostic capacity and early diagnosis and survival rates through rapid diagnostic centres (RDC). As of June 2021, there were 83 live RDC pathways across hospitals in England, compared to 12 in March 2020.

The 'Help us, help you' cancer symptoms awareness campaign will continue through the summer to encourage those who are experiencing worrying symptoms to contact their general practitioner as soon as possible. NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that all National Health Service cancer screening programmes are operational and sending out screening invitations at, or above, pre-pandemic levels.

■ Cereal Products: Labelling

Sarah Atherton:

[\[19733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of removing inconsistencies in the way that the nutrient profiling model scores breakfast cereal products, whereby some are scored as consumed and others are scored on a dry weight basis.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has not undertaken an assessment. The current nutrient profile score for breakfast cereals developed by the Food Standards Agency in 2004 is calculated on 100 grams of the product as sold, on a dry weight basis.

The possible implications of applying the nutrient profiling model from per 100 gram basis to per portion basis was considered as part of the 2007 review of the effectiveness of the nutrient profiling model to reduce the exposure of children to unhealthy advertising during children's television programming. It was recommended to retain the 100 gram base to avoid unnecessary complexity as there are few United Kingdom dietary recommendations on portion sizes and inconsistent portion sizes used on food or drink packs.

■ Cereal Products: Milk

Sarah Atherton:

[\[19734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the consumption of breakfast cereals (a) with and (b) without milk; and how that information is reflected in the nutrient profiling model.

Jo Churchill:

No data is held on the consumption of breakfast cereal with milk. Consumption of breakfast cereals without milk is reported in the National Diet and Nutrition Survey

(NDNS). The most recent NDNS report was published in December 2020 and presents findings for 2016/17 to 2018/19. The report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ndns-results-from-years-9-to-11-2016-to-2017-and-2018-to-2019>

The nutrient profiling model is used to identify products that are high in fat, salt or sugar in line with advertising restrictions rather than how the foods are eaten or consumption behaviour.

Sarah Atherton:

[19736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the health benefits of consuming breakfast cereal with milk as opposed to (a) other breakfast products and (b) not consuming breakfast.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has not made an assessment.

The Government's advice on a healthy, balanced diet is based on recommendations from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition and is captured in the Eatwell Guide. Advice includes choosing starchy carbohydrates such as breakfast cereals that are higher-fibre or wholegrain, with less added fat, salt and sugar. In order to meet nutritional requirements, it is important to consume regular meals throughout the day. Not eating breakfast may make it more difficult to meet recommended intakes of certain nutrients, such as fibre, B vitamins, iron and folate, commonly found in some breakfast cereals, and calcium found in milk.

■ Contraceptives

Dame Diana Johnson:

[19519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all pharmacies offer comprehensive factual information and advice on contraception.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: When pharmacists supply ongoing or emergency hormonal contraception, they are required by their contractual arrangements to provide appropriate advice and information to the person to enable them to take their medicines as intended. When providing emergency hormonal contraception, over the counter, pharmacy teams will also have a discussion with an individual, for example, on the most effective method of contraception, safe sex use of condoms and encourage women to consider ongoing contraception.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[19520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish a decision in response to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's consultation on the reclassification of the Lovima and Hana progestogen-only contraceptive pills, to enable those pills to be sold over-the-counter in pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: The consultation exercise on the proposal to reclassify two medicines containing desogestrel from prescription only medicines to pharmacy medicines has closed. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is reviewing the large number of responses received and the outcome of consultation will be communicated as soon as possible.

Dame Diana Johnson:**[19521]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that information on different contraception methods is available in a range of languages and formats.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: Public Health England provides comprehensive information on the full range of contraception methods at the following link:

www.sexwise.org.uk

This is accessible on a range of devices using formats such as text, graphics, comparison tables and downloadable leaflets. The website is in English and there are no plans at present to translate the information into other languages.

Dame Diana Johnson:**[19522]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that information on different methods of contraception is accessible to people who do not have easy access to the internet.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: Public Health England works closely with the Family Planning Association (FPA) to ensure information on contraception is up to date and available in different formats, including posters and leaflets. The FPA produces leaflets on all methods of contraception that are in use across sexual health services and general practice surgeries throughout the United Kingdom.

Public Health England manages the free National Sexual Health Helpline which provides information about all methods of contraception, including how they can be accessed.

Dame Diana Johnson:**[19523]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will undertake research on the demographic data his Department holds to make an assessment of the potential effect of (a) age and (b) deprivation on women accessing contraceptive services.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: The Department is developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which we plan to publish in 2021. We will consider a range of data and evidence as part of the development of the Strategy, which will explore issues of health inequalities in accessing contraception services. We will also

consider whether additional analysis of data or research is needed to help inform the Strategy as part of this process.

■ **Contraceptives: Young People**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[20340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all young people are able to access the full range of contraceptive options in a local setting.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[20341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle geographical variations in access to contraception in local settings for young people.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[20342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to engage and consult members of LGBTQ+ community on issues in respect of access to contraception.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which will be published in 2021. We will consider issues related to equitable access to contraception and geographical variations in access to contraception services, including access to contraception and contraception services for young people, as part of the Strategy's development.

In 2021/22, Public Health England will publish an analysis of a survey of trans and non-binary people's needs and experiences when accessing reproductive and sexual health services, including access to contraception.

■ **Coronavirus**

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[15156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution of 7 June 2021, Official Report 685, what progress his Department has made towards publishing on a daily basis the number of patients in hospital with covid-19 who have previously had (a) one, (b) two and (c) no injections of vaccine; and if he will publish a similar analysis of the daily number of covid-19 fatalities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 17 June 2021]: There are currently no plans to publish this data on a daily basis.

However, the information requested is published weekly in Public Health England's technical briefings, which form part of ongoing surveillance and vaccine effectiveness monitoring activity and are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/investigation-of-novel-sars-cov-2-variant-variant-of-concern-20201201>

■ Coronavirus: Drugs

Alex Norris: **[20490]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department is doing to ensure that medicines which have the potential to make patients less vulnerable to covid-19 by removing them from NHS Digital's high risk shielded patient list identification, including biologics for severe asthma, are appraised by NICE in a timely manner.

Alex Norris: **[20491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the delays caused by the covid-19 outbreak to NICE appraisals for medicines for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) groups, particularly those medicines which have the potential to better control a patient's condition and remove them from CEV classification.

Jo Churchill:

The 2019 Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access commits the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to publishing draft recommendations on all newly licensed treatments around the time of licensing, with final guidance within 90 days of marketing authorisation wherever possible. NICE may not always be able to meet this timescale for individual topics for a range of reasons, including where companies request a longer appraisal timescale.

During the first wave of COVID-19, NICE prioritised its work programme and only published guidance between March to June 2020 that was either therapeutically critical or related to addressing diagnostic or therapeutic interventions for COVID-19. Topics related to treatments for patients who were considered highly vulnerable were classed as therapeutically critical and were prioritised. Since June 2020, NICE has aimed to publish guidance in line with its standard timescales. Of the topics delayed during March to June 2020, all have been restarted where possible.

■ Coronavirus: Nasal Sprays

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: **[19697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential use of the SaNOTize nasal spray vaccine as a treatment for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is aware of the clinical trial in the United Kingdom for the SaNOTize nasal spray. However, no nasal sprays for the prevention of COVID-19 are currently licensed in the UK. The MHRA together with independent advisory groups, continues to review the emerging body of evidence regarding potential medicines for the prevention or treatment of COVID-19.

■ Coronavirus: Research

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[18467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will urgently commission research into the Beta variant of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has published a paper into the Beta variant, 'Evidence of escape of SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.351 from natural and vaccine-induced sera', which is available at the following link:

<https://researchportal.phe.gov.uk/en/publications/evidence-of-escape-of-sars-cov-2-variant-b1351-from-natural-and-v>

The National Institute for Health Research has funded studies looking at specific aspects of variants of concern, including the Beta variant. The studies are in progress and details will be published in due course .

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Daisy Cooper:

[18594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that Government-approved private providers of covid-19 tests have (a) a published complaints procedure, (b) published minimum standards of service and (c) a compensation scheme for those users who have received inadequate standards of service.

Jo Churchill:

Private testing providers must meet the minimum standards for COVID-19 testing services for international arrivals, including the relevant stage of United Kingdom Accreditation Service process. The minimum standards are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/testing-on-day-2-and-day-8-for-international-arrivals>

As individuals are contracting a private service. the Department does not offer compensation. However, we advise any customers to report any issues to the provider. If the issue cannot be resolved, the consumer should to contact their local trading standards office.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Ian Mearns:

[21190]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the mandatory covid-19 vaccination program for social care workers announced on 16 June 2021, whether he plans to exempt employees who are shown to already have covid-19 antibodies in their system from mandatory vaccination; and if he will publish the advice to support that decision.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The regulations to make vaccination a condition of deployment, laid on the 22 June, require care home providers to deploy only those staff and volunteers who have received a complete course of their COVID-19 vaccination, unless they are medically exempt.

There will be a small number of people where the clinical advice is that the COVID-19 vaccination is not suitable for them. Further details on this will be outlined in guidance, which we will provide in due course. This guidance will give more detail about exemptions, which will reflect the Green Book on Immunisation against infectious disease and clinical advice from the Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation.

Duncan Baker:[\[21346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) using the existing 2020-21 flu vaccination list for all future covid-19 booster vaccines and (b) the potential merits of using that list to protect all vulnerable people, including those with asthma who take daily Inhaled steroids.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are preparing for a potential booster vaccination programme from the autumn. Whilst we are planning for several potential scenarios, final decisions on the timing and scope of the booster programme will not be taken until later this year, in line with results from key clinical studies and independent advice from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The JCVI will review the emerging scientific evidence from studies on co-administering the flu and COVID-19 vaccines safely, alongside data supplied by manufacturers, to inform the Government in the decision-making process.

Navendu Mishra:[\[6501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people in the UK have been delayed from receiving any covid-19 vaccine because they have participated in the Novavax trials.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information is not held in the format requested

■ Defibrillators**Feryal Clark:**[\[19728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department provides incentives to the owners of private yet publicly accessible land, including shopping centres, to install defibrillators.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not provide incentives to owners of private land that is publicly accessible to install defibrillators.

■ Eating Disorders: Children

Thangam Debonnaire:

[\[16140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of funding for specialist support for services to support children with eating disorders in the South West; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allocating additional funding for those specialist support services to that region.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no specific assessment.

The funding made available to support the 2021/22 National Health Service operational planning and contracting round is ongoing. Through this process, local systems will work with their partner organisations, including clinical commissioning groups and local authorities in the South West, to agree their mental health finance planning for financial year 2021/22, which will include funding for eating disorders services. NHS England and NHS Improvement will review the plans against expected trajectories such as on waiting times targets for children and young people's eating disorder services, seek assurance on any major divergences and establish recovery plans where needed.

■ Family Hubs

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[19611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's Family Hubs: Growing up Well project, what role the Office for Health Promotion will play in the (a) siting of, (b) access to and (c) audit of family hubs.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is working with the Department for Education and other Government departments on the development of Family Hubs as part of the Growing Up Well project. We will present more detail on our plans and ambitions for the Office for Health Promotion in due course.

■ Gambling

Carolyn Harris:

[\[18542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Public Health England will publish its report into Gambling Related Harms.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England is carrying out an evidence review on gambling related harms. The evidence review has been delayed due to COVID-19 and is expected to be completed later in summer 2021.

■ **Gambling: Rehabilitation**

Navendu Mishra: [\[19722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether additional funding has been made available for the treatment of gaming addictions among young adults and children in response to increased addiction in that demographic in the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan committed to spending up to £15 million on 15 specialist problem gambling clinics by 2023/24. This funding includes the provision of treatment for gaming disorders through the National Centre for Gaming Disorders, which was set up to provide treatment for problem gamers aged 13 to 25 years old, living in England and Wales. The service sits alongside the National Problem Gambling Clinic in London.

■ **Gastroenteritis**

Jim Shannon: [\[19585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many adults are being treated for gastroenteritis in England.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not available in the format requested.

■ **Health Services**

Rachael Maskell: [\[21283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress he has made on establishing diagnostic hubs (a) nationally and (b) in York.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service is planning to open community diagnostic hubs (CDHs) in all regions in England this year. The location and services of CDHs are not yet confirmed and will be decided by NHS regions and local integrated care systems.

■ **Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[20431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme to include the travel costs of parents visiting their newborn babies in neonatal units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) is part of the NHS Low Income Scheme and was set up to provide financial assistance to those patients in receipt of a qualifying benefit who do not have a medical need for ambulance transport, but who require assistance with their travel costs. The HTCS is not setup to provide financial assistance to people visiting hospital inpatients.

There are currently no plans to extend the remit of the HTCS. Other possible sources of help with travel expenses for patients and visitors include hospital endowment funds, education departments, adult social care department and charities such as the Family Fund. Additionally, some trusts provide accommodation for parents in hospital.

■ Heart Diseases

Jim Shannon:

[\[20412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with heart valve disease in the last three years; and if he will have discussions with the British Heart Foundation to raise awareness of the risks and prevention of that disease.

Jo Churchill:

We do not hold the data for Northern Ireland as this is a devolved matter.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working in partnership with the British Heart Foundation to raise awareness of heart valve disease, ensuring that the disease is diagnosed early, enabling patients to get the treatment they need.

■ HIV Infection: Screening

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[20427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his the Government is taking to increase public awareness of HIV prevention through HIV testing campaigns.

Jo Churchill:

HIV Prevention England (HPE), the national HIV prevention campaign funded by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the Terrence Higgins Trust, aims to promote HIV testing and other safer sex interventions amongst black African communities, men who have sex with men and other groups in which there is a higher or emerging burden of infection. HPE operate an annual campaign promoting HIV testing during National HIV Testing Week.

PHE's Reproductive Health, Sexual Health and HIV Innovation Fund has supported a range of projects between 2017 and 2020 that deliver new approaches to HIV testing among the most affected populations.

■ HIV Infection: Sex and Relationship Education

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[20428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on providing young people with information about HIV and reducing anti-HIV stigma as part of the Sex and Relationships elements of Personal, Health and Social Education lessons.

Jo Churchill:

There have been no recent discussions. However, as part of the Government's commitment to reaching zero new HIV transmissions in England by 2030, the Department is currently developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan, which are planned for publication later this year. Officials continue to engage with the Department of Education the consideration of issues relating to HIV and how they are covered in the statutory curriculum in schools, as part of the 'intimate and sexual relationships' lessons under Personal, Health and Social Education.

Human Papillomavirus**Feryal Clark:****[19726]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to increase public awareness of (a) HPV and (b) the importance of HPV screening.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement work with Public Health England (PHE) and Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust to promote awareness of human papillomavirus (HPV) and the Cervical Screening Programme. This includes a range of social media campaigns which include narratives from participants' and health professionals' perspectives.

PHE has also published a range of promotional material and social media campaigns to raise awareness of HPV, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hpv-vaccination-programme>

The 'Helping you decide' leaflet informs women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 64 years old of the benefits and risks of cervical screening. This is sent with the invitation letter and is available in ten different languages and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-description-in-brief>

Human Papillomavirus: Enfield North**Feryal Clark:****[19727]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce waiting times for HPV screening and testing in Enfield North constituency.

Jo Churchill:

Following disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, cervical screening services in Enfield North recommenced in June 2020 and all women who had screening appointments delayed were invited to attend another appointment by September 2020. There is currently no backlog in appointments.

■ JBS

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[\[19492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that JBS, the Brazilian meat processing company, complies with food safety standards in its UK subsidiaries.

Jo Churchill:

All wholesale processors of food of animal origin within the United Kingdom are required to be approved under retained European hygiene regulations. This requires the establishment to undergo an onsite assessment to establish the premises are suitable and to present evidence of the efficacy of its Food Safety Management Systems to enable approval to be granted. When approval has been granted all establishments remain subject to official controls which include periodic audits as well as unannounced inspections, the frequency determined by compliance and risk. In the case of approved slaughterhouses there will also be the daily presence of Official Veterinarians to observe compliance with hygiene and animal welfare requirements.

If non-compliances are observed there is an enforcement hierarchy which includes verbal or written advice, formal enforcement, which can include suspension of production, right through to prosecution. Local authorities and the Food Standards Agency also have a responsibility to withdraw or suspend approval when evidence is found of major non-compliances which the business is unable to rectify.

■ Maternity Services: Birmingham

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[20477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of new mothers in Birmingham was offered the continuity of care midwifery model in (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Motor Neurone Disease

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[20333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase funding for motor neurone disease research and treatment over the next five years.

Edward Argar:

The Department funds research on health and social care through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). It is not usual practice to ring-fence funding for particular topics or conditions. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including motor neurone disease (MND).

Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money, and scientific quality.

NHS England and NHS Improvement commission the specialised care and treatment which patients with MND may receive from the specialised neurological treatment centres across England. Funding decisions for these are made in line with local priorities and in the context of the interim funding regime in place during the pandemic.

■ **NHS: Computer Software**

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[20413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people who have deleted the NHS Covid-19 App in each month from October 2020 to June 2021 inclusive.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[20415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on trends in the daily number of users of the NHS Covid-19 App.

Jo Churchill:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures**

Andrew Percy: [\[20599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to limit the supply of dermal fillers to licenced professionals.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is working with stakeholders to assess the need for strengthened safeguards around the regulation of providers who offer invasive non-surgical cosmetic procedures. We continue to explore whether restrictions on the supply and administration of dermal fillers are necessary to safeguard the public.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is working to develop a robust, world-leading regulatory regime for medical devices that prioritises patient safety. It plans to run a formal public consultation on future medical device regulation this summer which will cover whether the scope of United Kingdom medical device regulations should be extended to cover certain devices with a non-medical purpose, such as dermal fillers.

■ **Nutrition**

Sarah Atherton: [\[19735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has conducted analysis of consumer (a) understanding of the nutrient profiling model and (b) awareness of categories that are scored as consumed compared with on a dry weight basis.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom nutrient profiling model (UK NPM) is a tool used by regulators, industry and stakeholders and is not consumer facing, therefore no assessment has been made of consumer understanding or awareness of categories scored as consumed compared with on a dry weight basis.

The UK NPM was developed to identify products that are high in fat, salt or sugar in line with advertising restrictions. The model is not intended to reflect how the foods are eaten or consumption behaviour.

Retinitis Pigmentosa: Genetic Engineering**Jim Shannon:**[\[19584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has undertaken any research on the potential effectiveness of gene therapy in treating pigmentosa.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) contributes to retinitis pigmentosa research, including potential gene therapies. In the past five years, there have been five projects related to the condition directly funded through NIHR programmes and 22 studies supported by the NIHR's infrastructure.

In October 2019, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommended voretigene neparvovec, an adeno-associated virus vector-based gene therapy, for treating inherited retinal dystrophies caused by RPE65 gene mutations. NICE has two additional pieces of guidance on potential gene therapies for retinal conditions currently in the development and proposal stages.

Travel: Quarantine**Gill Furniss:**[\[19646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people returning from red list countries are receiving confirmation of their hotel quarantine booking by one week prior to arrival.

Gill Furniss:[\[19648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what standards he has set for those providing quarantine hotel rooms on the timely confirmation of bookings.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: For bookings made via the online portal, 100% of customers receive a confirmation and invoice within 15 minutes. For family room booking requests, 67% of all requests received three to five days ahead of travel with confirmations provided, subject to availability, 24 hours ahead of departure to the United Kingdom. Over 30% of all Managed Quarantine Service hotel bookings made are subject to customer amendment in advance of travel due to date change, an airline schedule change, or COVID-19 test result delay.

All bookings made online should be confirmed within 30 minutes.

Gill Furniss: [\[19647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure people returning from red list countries who require more than two hotel quarantine rooms are able to book that accommodation smoothly.

Gill Furniss: [\[19650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of quarantine hotel rooms for families with two or more children.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: The Department is constantly adding additional Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) hotel capacity to meet requirements for large family groups. Currently, 18% of all MQS hotel capacity is suitable for larger families.

It is not possible to select a particular room at the quarantine hotel. However, hotels will prioritise allocating larger or connecting rooms for families.

■ Visual Impairment: Rehabilitation**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[18544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to commission the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence to develop guidance and quality statements for local authority tertiary preventative services, including for specialist services such as vision rehabilitation.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines and quality standards cover the full patient pathway. NICE has issued a number of guidelines and quality standards that include recommendations that relate to local authority tertiary preventative services where relevant.

HOME OFFICE**■ Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs: Correspondence****Crispin Blunt:** [R] [\[20589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ask the Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) when he plans to reply to the letter from Professor David Nutt, Chair of the Drug Science Scientific Committee, dated 5 February 2021 on the ACMD's update report on medical cannabis from November 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

As the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) is independent from Government, its responses to correspondence are a matter for the ACMD.

■ Animal Experiments

Alex Sobel:

[\[18572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain that showed a seven per cent increase in scientific procedures on living animals in higher education and training between 2017 and 2018, what steps she is taking to ensure the reduction and replacement of animals used in that sector.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office assures the minimum number of animals are used for scientific procedures in higher education and training by the application of the 3Rs principles – replacement, reduction and refinement. Procedures on animals are only authorised after a rigorous assessment process, which is undertaken by the Home Office Inspectorate.

As part of the project licence application process, applicants are required to describe what steps they have taken to research non-animal alternative methodologies and why the use of animals is required to achieve their scientific objectives

■ Animal Experiments: Dogs

Alex Sobel:

[\[18575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018 report published in July 2019, what the five experiments that were conducted on dogs for the purpose of protection of the natural environment involved.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer the Hon Member to the question he previously asked and the answer given on 3rd September 2020 to UIN 13058.

Alex Sobel:

[\[18576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018 report published in July 2019, what types of test made up the 92 procedures conducted on dogs to satisfy plant protection product legislation; what type of products were tested; and what steps she is taking to reduce and replace the use of dogs in that category of testing.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer the Hon Member to the question he previously asked and the answer given on 3rd September 2020 to UIN 13059.

■ Animal Experiments: Inspections

Alex Sobel: [\[18584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the number of inspections of animal testing establishments carried out between 2011 and 2018 decreased.

Victoria Atkins:

The number of Inspections of licensed animal testing establishments between 2011 and 2018 would be expected to vary dependent on the baseline number of inspections, risk profiling and thematic inspections. Inspections are conducted by the Home Office according to risk-based criteria and as required by the legislation. Full details are given in the 2018 Regulators annual report available at: [Animals in Science Regulation Unit Annual Report 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

The Home Office inspects all establishments at a frequency that is fully compliant with the requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986).

■ Animal Experiments: Primates

Alex Sobel: [\[18573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018 report published in July 2019, for what reason the number of non-human primates used for the first time in experimental procedures who came from a first generation primate has increased from one in 2017 to 246 in 2018.

Victoria Atkins:

With reference to the report entitled Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018, published in July 2019, the change in the published figures for the first-generation primates (F1) from 2017 to 2018 was likely due to a correction amongst those establishments supplying the data over the definition of a self-sustaining colony. In the 2017 statistics some establishments with F1 primates returned data for them within the self-sustaining colony return.

The regulator subsequently provided guidance to all establishments to correct this in the 2018 returns.

■ Counter-terrorism: Advisory Bodies

Sarah Owen: [\[20547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of member of the Channel panel have been (a) Black, (b) Muslim, (a) from other minority ethnic backgrounds and (d) female.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not hold information on the proportion of Channel Panel members who are a) Black, b) Muslim, c) from other minority ethnic backgrounds and d) female.

Channel Panels are run by the Local Authority they sit in, and information on their composition is not held centrally.

■ Counter-terrorism: Databases

Sarah Owen:

[\[20545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued on (a) the use of and (b) access to the central database on which information on Prevent referrals is stored.

Kevin Foster:

Information and guidance on the use of, and access to, the central Prevent referral database is owned by the Police and not by the Home Office. We do not hold this information centrally.

■ Counter-terrorism: Equality

Sarah Owen:

[\[21344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what equality impact assessment her Department has carried out on the Prevent strategy.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has conducted Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) on the CONTEST strategy 2018 which includes Prevent.

We have also carried out additional EIAs for various strands of work within the Prevent programme in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

■ Deportation: India

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has (a) had discussions with relevant stakeholders and (b) set a target for the number of Indian nationals to be deported in talks with India on the Migration and Mobility Partnership MoU.

Chris Philp:

The Home Secretary signed the UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP) on 4 May. We continue to discuss implementation arrangements with Government of India counterparts. Whilst the agreement contains a number of mutually beneficial provisions including measures that will improve the speed and efficiency of returns processes we have no targets pertaining to the return of Indian nationals and no deportation targets.

■ Electric Scooters

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[20321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of e-scooters being used illegally; what steps she plans to take to tackle that unlawful use; and what guidance has been issued to police forces to support the consistent enforcement of road traffic law on this matter throughout the UK.

Kit Malthouse:

Enforcement of road traffic law is an operational matter for the police to determine in conjunction with local policing plans. Decisions on how to deploy available resources is a matter for Chief Officers, who will take into account any specific local problems, pressures and demands.

Electric scooters are classed as a motorcycle as defined in Section 185 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and, because of their low speed, within the subclass of moped. This means that electric scooters must abide by the same road traffic legislation as mopeds and motorcycles.

Legislation was amended in July 2020 to allow for rental e-scooter trials in selected areas with different rollouts that will each run for 12 months. The primary aim of the trials is to inform decision making as to the potential to legalise e-scooter use in future. Before being used on the road, the pilot rental e-scooters are required to meet all the requirements such as compliance with stringent construction regulations, registration, road tax, insurance and MOT testing.

Riding a powered scooter on a pavement, as with pedal cycles, is an offence under section 72 of the Highway Act 1835.

The police can deal with illegal e-scooter use by fixed penalty notices and penalty points for no insurance, 'not in accordance' or riding on pavement offences. Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides the power to seize privately owned e-scooters for driving without insurance or a driving licence. It is for the officer dealing with an incident to investigate and to decide upon the appropriate offence and enforcement action.

The Home Office has not issued guidance to police forces on the enforcement of road traffic law with regards to illegal e-scooter use, nor does it hold data on the number of e-scooters being used illegally.

We will continue to support the police to ensure they have the tools needed to enforce road traffic legislation including those relating to electric scooters.

■ General Register Office: Internet

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[20334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to question 15183 on General Register Office: Internet, what the evidential basis is for her assessment that the service issue has had no significant impact upon the public when registering life events; and what steps she plans to take in response to the

letter from the National Panel for Registration detailing the negative effect on the mental health of registrars as a result of that service service disruption.

Kevin Foster:

The General Register Office has acknowledged following introduction of new functionality in May, there has been performance issues around printing causing some disruption across the local registration service (as outlined in our response to PQ 15183).

However, this has not significantly impacted the public's ability to register life events as evidenced by the numbers of registrations continuing to take place, helped considerably by some parts of the registration service amending their processes where required.

In response to the letter from the National Panel for Registration, a letter was sent to all Proper Officers in England and Wales on 18 June outlining the plans to stabilise and improve the performance of the registration online system (RON).

■ **Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre: Industrial Health and Safety**

Catherine West:

[\[21304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment has been made of the health and safety conditions of the planned immigration removal centre in Medomsley, County Durham.

Chris Philp:

Protecting the safety, health and welfare of individuals in immigration detention is our top priority. The new IRC will be operated in line with Detention Centre Rules 2001, published operating standards for IRCs and Detention Services Orders; a framework which ensures the safety and security of those detained in our care.

Safety has been in-built to the design in line with The Building Regulations 2010, including fire safety in line with current regulations.

■ **Home Office: Freedom of Information**

Cat Smith:

[\[21257\]](#)

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

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not use a red, amber and green rating system for categorising FOI requests according to their presentational sensitivity.

■ Immigration: Armed Forces

Jim Shannon:

[18517]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to grant permanent residency to UK troops who are from overseas who have served in the UK armed forces for over 12 years.

Kevin Foster:

This Government hugely values every member of our outstanding Armed Forces and we are humbled when non-UK nationals choose to serve our country.

It is for these reasons we explicitly provide for all non-UK service personnel discharged from HM Forces to obtain settlement in the UK having served for four years or more or having been discharged for medical reasons due to their service via the online form SET(AF):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-settle-in-uk-as-former-member-of-hm-forces-setaf>

In addition to these provisions Commonwealth personnel who have served for five years or more in HM Forces can apply to become a British Citizen. Naturalising as a British Citizen whilst serving removes any need to apply for further immigration permission to settle in the UK on a permanent basis when they discharge.

The Home Office and Ministry of Defence have launched a public consultation which proposes waiving the settlement application fee for non-UK service personnel who have served at least 12 years in HM Forces.

We would welcome any views on these proposals before the consultation closes on 7 July:

[Immigration Fees Public Consultation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/immigration-fees-public-consultation)

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Feryal Clark:

[20555]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of EU citizens who may miss the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme of 30 June 2021; and what steps she plans to take in response to people missing that deadline.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the '[EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)', with more than 5.6 million applications received to 31 May 2021.

Our focus remains on encouraging those EU citizens and their family members eligible for the scheme who have yet to apply to do so before the 30 June 2021 deadline for those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period.

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EUSS and cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of EU citizens in the UK. The published figures include non-EEA citizen family members, Irish citizens and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU citizen population.

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

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the Government has already made clear where a person eligible for status under the EUSS has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June deadline 2021, they will be given a further opportunity to apply. Guidance as to the approach we will adopt to this was published on 1 April 2021. It can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-caseworker-guidance

Virginia Crosbie:

[20569]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to facilitate the introduction of a digital app for use by those approved under the EU Settlement Scheme to demonstrate their approved status.

Kevin Foster:

We continue to welcome feedback on how we can improve our services.

Home Office officials are planning to meet with the 3million group to discuss the feasibility of their suggested approach of using a digital app for this purpose.

Virginia Crosbie:

[20572]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) raise awareness of the application process and deadline for the EU Settled Status Scheme for (i) children, (ii) looked after children, (iii) people over 65 and (iv) vulnerable people and (b) ensure that people who apply before 30 June 2021 but who have not received a decision by that date will not lose their rights immediately.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office remains committed to ensuring those who are eligible can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), including those who are vulnerable, need extra support or are harder to reach.

£22 million of funding, through to 30 September 2021, has been awarded to a network of 72 charities and local authorities across the UK, to ensure important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach, and no one is left behind. These organisations have helped more than 310,000 vulnerable people to apply to the EUSS already.

Local authorities have relevant statutory duties where looked after children are concerned and we have been working closely with them since 2018 to help ensure these duties are fulfilled in relation to making or supporting applications to the EUSS,

with additional funding provided following a new burdens assessment. A child-friendly EUSS leaflet has been shared with our extensive network of stakeholders who support children, including local authorities, children's charities and the education sector.

Communications to support the EUSS have been live since 2019, with almost £8 million spent on marketing ahead of the 30 June 2021 deadline to reach EEA and Swiss citizens in all UK regions and nations. This activity, which also includes toolkits, assets and information translated into 26 EEA languages, including Welsh, has helped to drive over 5.6 million applications to the scheme to 31 May 2021.

Under the Citizens' Rights (Application Deadline and Temporary Protection) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, those who apply before the 30 June 2021 deadline, but whose application is not decided until after it, will have their existing EU law rights protected pending the outcome of their application, including any appeal. Also in line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, those with reasonable grounds for missing the deadline will be able to make a late application, with non-exhaustive guidance published on 1 April 2021 to underpin a flexible and pragmatic approach to dealing with late applications.

■ Independent Office for Police Conduct

Alex Sobel: [\[19668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases are awaiting allocation to complaint handlers at the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold data on the numbers of cases referred to the IOPC that are awaiting decision or allocation. The Independent Office for Police Conduct will write to the Honourable Member and I shall place a copy in the Library of the House.

■ NHS: Counter-terrorism

Sarah Owen: [\[20546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions (a) she and (b) officials in her Department have had with counterparts in the Department for Health and Social Care on ensuring the integration of Prevent as a safeguarding duty in the NHS with minimal disturbance to the provision of healthcare.

Kevin Foster:

The Prevent Duty has been in place since 2015. All staff working in NHS Trusts in England and Wales have a legal obligation to safeguard against radicalisation and report concerns via a Prevent referral.

The Department for Health and Social Care funds a network of 7 NHS England Regional Serious Violence and Contextual Safeguarding Leads, who provide healthcare specific advice to all NHS organisations within their region on integrating Prevent into their safeguarding practices. The Home Office works closely with this

network and with DHSC to support the delivery of the Prevent Duty within the healthcare system.

The responsibilities for safeguarding form part of the core functions for all NHS organisations. Prevent is embedded within safeguarding in the NHS, ensuring the duties of safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk are applied consistently and conscientiously and with over 300,000 patient contacts every day, the NHS has an important role to play in preventing vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism.

■ **Police Covenant Oversight Board**

Sarah Champion:

[\[21232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Police Covenant Oversight Board will sit.

Kit Malthouse:

The first meeting of the Police Covenant Oversight Board will take place this summer.

■ **Police: Recruitment**

Damien Moore:

[\[20506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to become a police officer were received by the police in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020; how many of those applications disclosed a previous or existing mental health condition; and how many of those who disclosed a previous or existing mental health condition in their application form received a job offer.

Kit Malthouse:

Data on applications to become a police officer were not collected by the Home Office prior to October 2019. Since the launch of the Government's drive to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers by March 2023 data on the number of applications to become a police officer have been published quarterly in the Police Officer Uplift statistics.

The latest release, covering the situation as at 31 March 2021, shows that 139,312 applications to become a police officer have been received by police forces since October 2019.

The next release, covering the situation to 30 June 2021, is scheduled for publication on 28th July, and will be available alongside previous releases here: [Police Officer uplift statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Home Office does not collect any information on the number of applications or job offers where a previous or existing mental health condition has been disclosed.

■ Repatriation: India

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and which (a) Sikh community groups, (b) charities and (c) Gurdwaras her Department has approached on its voluntary return programme, including distributing leaflets and holding surgeries.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how her Department decides whether and which organisations to approach to seek assistance with the voluntary return programme.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a breakdown of the funding that has been granted to (a) Sikh community organisations, (b) charities and (c) Gurdwaras in exchange for support with the voluntary return programme for each of the last five years.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Indian nationals have come forward via the voluntary return scheme in connection to voluntary return surgeries at (a) Gurdwaras, (b) Sikh community organisations and (c) charities.

Chris Philp:

- We do not hold the information you have requested. We do not hold information on every contact or engagement with a faith group, charity or community group. [18552]
- Immigration Enforcement work with faith and community groups at both a local and national level, with a focus on delivering a support mechanism for people who wish to engage with the Home Office to regularise their stay or to return home with some financial support. All engagement is purely of a voluntary nature. [18553]
- Immigration Enforcement engage across all communities where there is a demand, ensuring actions are proportionate, respectful and with the direct approval and support of the organisation. [18553]
- The total amount of Home Office payments to Indian or Sikh organisations that assisted with voluntary returns messaging for the last five financial years is as follows:

2016/17: £45,000

2017/18: £50,714.48

2018/19: £42,993.83

2019/20: £22,211.27

2020/21: £0

- The amounts paid in a financial year may also include accruals for payments that were due at the previous financial year. [18554]
- * The 2016/17 -2018/19 figures provided are held on an archived Home Office management information system and therefore this information has been taken from offline records and should be treated as provisional.
- We do not hold the information you have requested. There are multiple avenues for individuals to access assistance to return home, this includes calling the voluntary returns service, completing an online form and speaking to immigration officials. It is, therefore, not possible for us to confirm how many people have come forward to the voluntary return service via an immigration surgery. [18555]

■ **Sayed Alwadaei**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[21163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to determine when the three-year-old daughter of Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei is planned to receive a (a) biometric identification card and (b) response to her citizenship application.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases.

Applications received by the Home Office are considered in accordance with UKVI customer service standards which is 6 months for standard applications.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: Boats**

Bill Wiggin:

[\[20327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department is doing with rubber dinghies and boats seized from illegal immigrants arriving on British beaches.

Chris Philp:

Rubber dinghies and boats seized under the immigration act are stored under the control of the Queen's warehouse. All goods that are seized that are not required for forensic and/or criminal proceedings are required to be held for a period of 12 months before consideration of disposal.

Where no claim request has been received by the Queen's warehouse the goods will be disposed of after the required time.

Due to the duration that the goods seized are held, they have not been worthy of consideration of sale or donation due the question of their seaworthiness and significant deterioration whilst in storage.

A Statutory instrument has been developed to amend current legislation to enable the disposal of said goods in a reduced time where no forensic or criminal proceedings are outstanding.

■ Windrush Generation: Southwark**Neil Coyle:** [\[21238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people resident in the London Borough of Southwark have (a) applied for and (b) received compensation under the Windrush Compensation Scheme; and how much compensation has been paid out to Southwark residents.

Neil Coyle: [\[21239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in the London Borough of Southwark have received a grant letter, certificate or residence permit under the Windrush Compensation Scheme confirming (a) their existing status, (b) a new granting of status for (i) British citizenship, (ii) indefinite leave to enter, (iii) indefinite leave to remain, (iv) limited leave to remain, (v) the right of abode and (vi) other immigration status.

Neil Coyle: [\[21240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in the London Borough of Southwark have under the terms of the Windrush Compensation Scheme been refused (a) British citizenship, (b) indefinite leave to enter the UK, (c) indefinite leave to remain in the UK, (d) limited leave to remain in the UK, (e) the right of abode in the UK and (f) any other immigration status.

Priti Patel:

The nationality and country of residence of applicants is published as part of the regular transparency data release which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-may-2021>.

We do not currently record data in a way which allows us to report on the location of applicants in the UK.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Counter-terrorism****Sarah Owen:** [\[20548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what regular discussions his Department has with representatives of (a) local communities, (b) minority groups and (c) faith groups on the impact of the Prevent strategy.

Eddie Hughes:

Prevent is about safeguarding vulnerable people and stopping them being exploited by terrorist recruiters. This work is led by the Home Office which facilitates a comprehensive programme of engagement events aimed at local communities around the country, which invites the public to learn more about Prevent and discuss

their views. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government engages communities on a range of topics but does not do so specifically to discuss Prevent.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[21314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to reduce the planning burdens of installing electric car charging points in listed homes.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is fully committed to encouraging homeowners to incorporate energy efficiency measures in their properties in order to tackle climate change. As part of this, we recognise the need to ensure that more historic buildings are able to be adapted to support our zero carbon objectives.

In our recently published White Paper, *Planning for the Future*, we have therefore committed to reviewing and updating the planning framework for listed buildings and conservation areas, to ensure their significance is conserved while allowing, where appropriate, sympathetic changes to support their continued use and address climate change.

■ **Housing: Construction**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[20553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the national shortage of building supplies reported by the Construction Leadership Council in May 2021, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of that shortage on the Government's plans to support more (a) small to medium-sized house builders and (b) self-builders into the housing sector.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG is aware of reports of shortages for some materials and is monitoring the situation. We are examining the barriers that SME housebuilders face as part of our ongoing work to improve productivity and competition in the housing market and open the market up to smaller builders.

The Government is supporting the sector through our existing £3 billion Home Building Fund (Short Term Fund). The Fund provides development loans to help those building homes for sale or rent and is available to borrowers that can demonstrate an inability to access finance via the private market. The Fund is a flexible source of funding administered by Homes England on behalf of the Government and is currently open to applications

Additionally, the Bacon Review, commissioned by the Prime Minister, is undertaking a report to establish a plan to scale up self and custom build homes and provide recommendations to Government. If material shortages become an ongoing and material obstacle to growth it will be factored into our plans to support the sectors.

■ Planning Permission

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[20315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the minimum housing density is which local planning authorities can impose as a condition of granting planning permission for housing on (a) greenfield sites and (b) brownfield sites in England; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government does not impose a minimum density requirement nationally, but our National Planning Policy Framework provides strong encouragement to local authorities to make the most of suitable brownfield sites, especially for new homes. It is for each local authority to consider what housing density would be appropriate for any part of its area, and to incorporate relevant policies in its local plan as necessary. This should take into account local constraints, which the local authority is best placed to assess. A local authority may also specify what density is appropriate in a housing scheme by imposing planning conditions on the planning permission. We have empowered local communities to create local design guidance and design codes, which can include limits on building height and density where appropriate to protect the character of a place.

■ Recreation Spaces: Urban Areas

Stuart Anderson:

[\[18593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to increase access to green spaces for people who live in built-up areas.

Luke Hall:

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of green space for our communities, particularly for our physical and mental health. Between 2017 – 2019, Government has made £16.3 million available to support parks and green spaces including those in urban environments. This includes the Future Parks Accelerator, a joint National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Trust programme to support a cohort of 8 local authority areas to transform their parks estates, testing and learning from new and innovative models of parks management and funding to create more sustainable parks estates for the future. The learning from the programme will be shared widely across the parks sector to help local authorities to develop sustainable plans for their parks estates.

As we look to recover from the pandemic, my Department is working across Government, particularly with the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, on a cross Government approach to increase access to green space.

■ Rents: Arrears

Mike Kane:

[R] [18528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the publication of the Household Resilience Study, Wave 2, what assessment he has made of the reasons that the proportion of private renters in arrears has increased during the covid-19 pandemic.

Eddie Hughes:

The latest published data from the English Housing Survey Household Resilience Study from November – December 2020, suggests that 9% of private renters are in arrears, compared to 3% pre pandemic. Of the 9% (353,000 households) in arrears, two thirds are in arrears of less than 2 months, indicating the Government package of economic support measures have effectively prevented a widespread build-up of rent arrears.

The full breakdown of reasons for difficulty in keeping up with rent payments is provided in Table T20 of the Household Resilience Study Wave 2: Wave 2 tables, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-2>.

Mike Kane:

[R] [18529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the ability of individual private landlords to sustain tenant rent arrears that have accrued since covid-19 lockdown measures started in March 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

We have been supporting landlords through helping tenants with extensive financial support to continue paying rent. The UK Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support which is available to tenants. The Coronavirus Job Reception Scheme and the wider package of economic support measures have effectively prevented a widespread build up of rent arrears, by supporting private renters to continue paying their rent. This is evidenced by the latest published data from the English Housing Survey Household Resilience Study from November – December 2020, which suggests that the vast majority (91%) of private renters are up to date with their rent. Of the 9% (353,000 households) in arrears, two thirds are in arrears of less than 2 months. Given this, we expect that the majority of landlords have not seen significant losses due to tenant rent arrears since Covid-19 measures started in March 2020.

Where landlords find themselves in coronavirus-related hardship, mortgage lenders agreed to offer payment holidays of up to six months, including for buy-to-let mortgages. Mortgage payment holidays agreed before 31 March 2021 can continue until 31 July 2021, whilst other tailored forbearance options may be available through lenders.

■ Towns Fund

Steve Reed: [\[20419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department plans to undertake to measure the effect of the projects chosen by his Department to receive accelerated funding from the Towns Fund.

Luke Hall:

The Department has established a robust monitoring and evaluation process for the Towns Fund. Through this framework the Department will ensure that projects funded through the Towns Fund are delivering on the funds objectives to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth through investment in land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure, and connectivity.

Accelerated funding allocated to Town Deal places will be monitored as part of this framework.

Steve Reed: [\[20605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16125 on the Towns Fund, if his Department will publish the Heads of Terms agreed with towns.

Luke Hall:

Once the Department has agreed Heads of Terms with all towns we intend to publish details on each Town Deal.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agricultural Products: Food

Catherine West: [\[20474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the potential (a) environmental and (b) carbon impact of agricultural products entering the UK food market as a result of the proposed future UK-Australia trade deal.

Greg Hands:

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

HM Government carried out a public consultation and scoping assessment for its free trade agreement negotiation with Australia, which can be found on HM Government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-approach-to-negotiating-a-free-trade-agreement-with-australia/uk-australia-free-trade-agreement-the-uks->

[strategic-approach](#). This preliminary scoping assessment considered illustrative scenarios and served as a point of reference when concluding the agreement in principle. Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment will be published prior to implementation.

■ **Agricultural Products: USA**

Emily Thornberry: [\[19524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-Australia free trade agreement: the UK's strategic approach, published 17 June 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of Australian agricultural products modelled under scenario two, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase is in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry: [\[19525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-Australia free trade agreement: the UK's strategic approach, published 17 June 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of Australian semi-processed food products modelled under scenario two, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase is in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry: [\[19526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-New Zealand free trade agreement: the UK's strategic approach, published 17 June 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of New Zealand agricultural products modelled under scenario two, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase is in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry: [\[19527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-New Zealand free trade agreement: the UK's strategic approach, published 17 June 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of New Zealand semi-processed food products modelled under scenario two, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase is in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry: [\[19528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-US Free Trade Agreement, published 2 March 2020, what the (a) percentage

increase is of UK imports of US agricultural products modelled under scenario two, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase is in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[19529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-US Free Trade Agreement: the UK's strategic approach, published 2 March 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of US semi-processed food products modelled under scenario two, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[19530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-US Free Trade Agreement, published 2 March 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of US agricultural products modelled under scenario one, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[19531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's report, UK-US Free Trade Agreement: the UK's strategic approach, published 2 March 2020, what the (a) percentage increase is of UK imports of US semi-processed food products modelled under scenario one, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes and (b) forecast increase is in total quantity of imports underpinning that estimate, expressed in (i) volume and/or (ii) financial value, either in point estimates or a range of outcomes.

Greg Hands:

The scoping assessments published in June 2020 for Australia and New Zealand, and the US scoping assessment published in March 2020 assessed the potential impacts of possible deals in advance of negotiations, under various scenarios.

The assessments included estimates of the long run impacts on imports from these countries into the UK if the scenarios described in these assessments were implemented. The final agreement that the UK negotiates with these partners will differ from the scenarios described in those scoping assessments. Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment will be published.

■ **Beef and Sheep Meat: Australia**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[21186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether there is no conditionality on animal welfare standards in the newly agreed tariff rate quotas for (a) beef and (b) lamb

as part of the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement as agreed in principle; and whether she plans to raise that matter with her counterparts the Australian Government as part of the legal scrubbing of the texts before that Free Trade Agreement is fully agreed.

Greg Hands:

The deal the UK has done is the first by Australia to ever include an Animal Welfare chapter as part of the package agreed. The UK has secured ground-breaking provisions on Animal Welfare going further than any free trade agreement (FTA) in force anywhere in the world.

This includes a non-regression clause, a first for an FTA. Securing a commitment to non-regression on animal welfare standards means that neither country can lower their animal welfare standards to undercut the other to effect trade.

The UK has also secured a comprehensive partnership to work with Australia, including internationally, to progress animal welfare in partnership with Australia.

■ **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership:
Intellectual Property**

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[19534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership on the intellectual property sector.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[19535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether negotiations on accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership will respect the UK's obligations to (a) the European Patent Convention and (b) other international agreements.

Greg Hands:

The UK possesses a world leading intellectual property regime, and it will not sign trade deals that compromise it. The Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) sets coherent and consistent rules in intellectual property, which will benefit both UK businesses and consumers. CPTPP represents a baseline and commits parties to a minimum level of IP standards.

The UK takes its existing international obligations seriously and have no intention of leaving the European Patent Convention or any other international intellectual property conventions that the UK is party to.

■ **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership:
Pesticides**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[19712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that UK pesticide standards will be upheld during negotiations on joining in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Greg Hands:

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership protects the right for members to regulate on public policy issues such as environmental standards. This includes setting regulations on pesticides. The Government will continue to ensure that its own levels of protection are based on appropriate scientific risk assessment with the protection of people and the environment being of greatest importance. The Government shares the public's high regard for the UK's environmental protections and will not compromise on them. The Government has ensured in law that its existing standards will remain in place, and is clear that trade does not have to come at the expense of the environment.

■ Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information**Emily Thornberry:**[\[20343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 15187 on Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information, who requested that officials in her Department in 2019 introduce a colour-coding system to track the (a) timeliness of responses, (b) progress of responses and (c) sensitivity of information in all Freedom of Information cases.

Greg Hands:

The Department's case management system was introduced to help the Department track and evidence compliance with its Freedom Of Information obligations, as part of regular ongoing improvements to the Department's processes. As such, no single person requested its introduction.

Emily Thornberry:[\[20344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 15187 on Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information, in which month of 2019 did officials in her Department introduce a colour-coding system to track the (a) timeliness of responses, (b) progress of responses and (c) sensitivity of information in all Freedom of Information cases.

Greg Hands:

The Department's case management system was introduced to help the Department track and evidence compliance with its Freedom Of Information obligations, as part of regular ongoing improvements to the Department's processes. It was introduced in May 2019.

■ Department for International Trade: New Zealand**Ruth Jones:**[\[19687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she last met her New Zealand counterpart; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

New Zealand Trade and Export Growth Minister Damien O'Connor concluded a day of detailed talks on June 17 in London with the Secretary of State for International Trade.

The UK and New Zealand held constructive and productive discussions towards the conclusion of a high-quality and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that will support sustainable and inclusive trade. Both countries are confident that the remaining issues will be resolved, with talks on track to deliver an ambitious Free Trade Agreement, bringing both strategic and economic benefits to the United Kingdom.

■ Department for International Trade: Southern African Development Community**Ruth Jones:**[\[19689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she last met representatives of the Southern African Development Community.

Greg Hands:

The Secretary of State met with representatives of several Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States at the signing of the UK-South African Customs Union and Mozambique Economic Partnership Agreement in October 2019. She also met the Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, at the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January 2020.

The British High Commissioner in Gaborone (as the UK Special Representative to the SADC) and her team engage regularly with the SADC Secretariat on a range of economic, climate, and political issues – most recently, in June 2021.

■ Department for International Trade: Training**Philip Davies:**[\[19549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, on Unconscious bias training, what steps she has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in her Department.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) stopped mandating completion of the Cabinet Office supplied Unconscious Bias (UB) digital (e-learning) training for all staff (including UKEF) in November 2019 when they replaced it with Diversity and Inclusion (2019) training. This was later superseded in 2020 with Inclusion in the Civil Service training.

All the above digital training is/was owned and supplied by Civil Service Learning (CSL) who are an expert service function of the Cabinet Office.

The DIT internal intranet site and Learning Hub were both updated in 2019 to remove reference to the standalone UB training and replaced with the new alternate recommended training. In addition, steps were taken to ensure relevant DIT policies

and processes were updated to remove and/or replace reference to the standalone UB digital training as appropriate.

■ **Import Duties: Environment Protection**

Emily Thornberry: [\[19532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which product categories under the UK Global Tariff, presented with their commodity codes, are classed as environmental goods.

Emily Thornberry: [\[19533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which product categories subject to a third-country duty under the UK Global Tariff, presented with their commodity codes, are classed as environmental goods.

Greg Hands:

The UK Global Tariff liberalised a list of 104 environmental goods to promote the deployment of renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, carbon capture, and the circular economy through recycling and reducing single use plastics. For example, goods such as LED lights, with commodity code 85395000, were identified for tariff reduction to support the Government's objectives for energy efficiency and increasing generation of energy from renewable sources.

■ **JBS: Corruption**

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [\[19490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made an assessment of the implications for her policies of the (a) findings of UK investigations into JBS, the Brazilian meat processing company, and (b) fines that the US parent company JBS SA was charged with for US foreign bribery.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [\[19491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to guilty plea of JBS SA to US foreign bribery charges, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that subsidiaries of that company in the UK do not replicate those practices.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [\[20322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what information her Department holds on the seven subsidiaries of the Brazilian meat processing company JBS.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) works with Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, a division of JBS which owns Moy Park and Pilgrim's UK, supporting their UK operations.

All businesses operating in the UK, including those with foreign ownership, must conduct their business with integrity, (acting responsibly, honestly and abiding by ethical principles) and, in compliance with UK law [such as the Bribery Act 2010].

DIT supports foreign investors across all industries, encouraging: the growth of their UK based interests and, their contribution to future job creation and the levelling-up agenda.

JUSTICE

■ Criminal Records: Disclosure of Information

Dawn Butler:

[\[18503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department takes to support people with minor offenses on their record received when they were a minor; and whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of changing the system of automatic revelation of past convictions.

Alex Chalk:

We are committed to supporting children in turning their lives around and recognise that having a criminal record can have a significant impact on children, and adults that offended as a child. Youth criminal records are treated differently to adult criminal records in terms of disclosure, as those with convictions received when under 18 are generally disclosed for a shorter period than those of adults.

There have recently been significant reforms in this area:

In November 2020, the Government implemented legislation to change the rules governing disclosure for sensitive roles (those working with children, vulnerable adults or in a position of public trust). This removed the disclosure of youth cautions, reprimands and warnings and the multiple conviction rule. Previously, if an individual had more than one conviction, each conviction had to be disclosed on standard or enhanced certificates irrespective of the nature of the offences or the time separating them. This legislation removed that requirement and will particularly benefit those with childhood cautions who have moved away from their past.

We are also proposing further changes to help those who committed minor offences as children to move on with their lives. The Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, currently in Commons committee stage, proposes significant reductions to rehabilitation periods (the length of time that someone needs to disclose their criminal record for general purposes) for custodial sentences of under four years and community sentences, including for childhood convictions.

These significant changes to the criminal records disclosure regime will support those who have not committed serious offences and have ceased offending, bettering their chance of accessing employment and reducing their likelihood of reoffending.

Regarding the rules surrounding automatic disclosure of past convictions, we have considered whether a sealing/review mechanism for youth criminal records disclosure would be desirable. However, the Justice Committee (report into Youth Justice) in 2017 recognised that introducing a mechanism whereby records could become 'sealed' would create unsustainable pressures on the decision-making body and

found that an automatic filtering system should be retained, albeit with substantial revisions. This aligns with the 2019 Supreme Court ruling on aspects of the disclosure regime, in which the Court was clear that such a mechanism was not necessary for a proportionate system. We are therefore not pursuing proposals on sealing criminal records by application, rather focusing on the rules which determine criminal records and their disclosure.

■ **Marriage: Humanism**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[20469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to legally recognise humanist marriages in England.

Alex Chalk:

A Law Commission report due later this year is expected to present options for wholesale reform to the law governing marriage ceremonies, which the Government will consider carefully. Options being explored by the Law Commission include offering couples greater flexibility to form their own ceremonies, allowing the ceremony to take place in a much broader range of locations, and powers to hold weddings remotely in a national emergency. The Government will decide on provision for non-religious belief marriage on the basis of the Law Commission's recommendations.

■ **Prisons: Visits**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[21153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether an assessment has been made of the effect of the number of prison visits received by a prisoner on offending rates after release.

Alex Chalk:

This Government is committed to reducing reoffending by ensuring that all offenders have the tools they need to turn their backs on crime.

Families and friends can be a positive influence on reducing reoffending. Strengthening the ties individuals have with their families and friends is one of the many important factors to successful rehabilitation and reducing intergenerational crime.

We know family contact can reduce the likelihood of reoffending, Ministry of Justice research analysis reporting on surveys carried out from 2001 to 2004 found that the odds of reoffending were 39% higher for prisoners who had not received visits compared to those who had. The research summary is available here: [Factors linked to re-offending: a one-year follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004 \(antoniocasella.eu\)](#). However, information on the number of visits a prisoner receives and a reduction in reoffending behaviour is not available.

The latest published data on reoffending rates for those released from custody was published 27 May: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2019>

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Overseas Trade: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[16266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the Irish Republic's Central Statistics Office showing the value of Irish Republic exports to Northern Ireland increasing between January to April 2021 by 40 per cent to €977 million, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the Northern Ireland Protocol is not causing the displacement of Great Britain to Northern Ireland trade with Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland trade.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Protocol is a delicate balance, designed to support the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and avoid disruption. This means that East-West political, economic and social links are safeguarded as well as North-South.

The statistics in question do not specify the end destination of goods and do not show what proportion are being sent into the rest of the UK. They also do not include trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and without this, the scale of any displacement is difficult to estimate.

However, longstanding trade flows are being disrupted. The UK is working hard and in good faith to find solutions. Last week's Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee allowed for an open and frank discussion on the progress made to date and the challenges ahead, emphasising the need for urgent solutions.

To support the significant trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain we have launched the UK Trader Scheme and the Movement Assistance Scheme to support traders operating under the Protocol. We will also establish a reimbursement scheme for goods that attract a tariff, but which can subsequently be shown to have remained in the UK customs territory and further details will be announced in due course.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Andrew Gwynne:

[21162]

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his in-person meeting with the Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa on 17 June 2021, whether he had discussions on human rights in Bahrain during that meeting.

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[21242\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he discussed human rights in Bahrain with the Crown Prince, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, Salman Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and accompanying Bahraini officials at their meeting on 17 June.

Boris Johnson:

The Crown Prince and I discussed a wide range of matters. We regularly raise human rights issues with the Government of Bahrain and continue to engage with the Government of Bahrain to support its reform agenda.

TRANSPORT

■ Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme

Robert Halfon:

[\[21188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will match the support given to retail and hospitality sectors by extending the Airports and Ground Operators Support Scheme to offer relief equivalent to full, uncapped business rates in 2021.

Robert Courts:

The aviation sector is crucial to the UK's economy and businesses across the industry have drawn on an unprecedented package of economic measures which we have put in place. This includes support through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Airport and Ground Operations Scheme. In total, we estimate that by the end of September 2021 the air transport sector will have benefited from around £7bn of Government support since the start of the pandemic.

The Airport and Ground Operations Scheme provides eligible commercial airports support towards their fixed costs. The Scheme originally opened in January to provide support to airports for the 2020/21 financial year. In the March Budget, the Chancellor announced a six-month renewal to the scheme from April, initial payments will be made towards the end of the summer.

The caps on the support strike an appropriate balance between supporting airports and ground handling companies in financial distress while protecting the interests of the taxpayer.

The support will help airports and ground handlers following the introduction of international travel restrictions designed to protect the public. We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

■ Aviation

Ruth Edwards:

[\[18611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to support the recovery of the aviation sector.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the air transport sector due to COVID-19. The sector is crucial to the UK's economy and businesses across the industry have drawn on an unprecedented package of economic measures which we have put in place. In total, we estimate that by the end of September 2021 the air transport sector (airlines, airports and related services) will have benefited around £7bn of Government support since the start of the pandemic.

The Global Travel Taskforce has worked with industry and international partners to develop a risk-based framework that can facilitate the return of international travel while managing Variants of Concern. There will be checkpoint reviews on 28 June, 31 July and 1 October 2021 to take account of the domestic and international health picture.

The Government is also working on a strategic framework for the future of the aviation sector. It will focus on building back better and ensuring a successful UK aviation sector for the future. This will be published later this year.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[21144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the risk to public health caused by people who have been fully vaccinated against covid-19 travelling together in an aircraft with high efficiency particulate air filters in use; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

Vaccination greatly reduces transmission and two doses provide a very high degree of protection against serious illness and death. Air conditioning systems on modern aircraft filter cabin air every few minutes through High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters. These filters are very effective at capturing airborne microbes in the filtered air and, when coupled with the drawn in fresh air, can help to mitigate the longer-range risk of transmission.

■ Blue Badge Scheme: Theft**Theresa Villiers:**[\[19515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on tackling theft of blue badges from cars.

Theresa Villiers:[\[19516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to modernise the blue badge system to allow local authorities to give blue badge holders the option of registering their car with the scheme and enable parking enforcement wardens to check the registration plate for entitlement to park, rather than requiring a blue badge to be displayed.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Current legislation provides local authorities with the means to tackle abuse of the Blue Badge scheme locally, such as the power to retain and cancel badges found to be stolen. The Department for Transport continues to work closely with local authorities aiming to improve the consistency of local enforcement to tackle fraud and misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme by acting swiftly and sharing best practice. The Department keeps the Blue Badge scheme under review and is always looking to identify potential ways to develop and improve the scheme over time to make it better for the user.

Some local authorities also offer Blue Badge holders living and working in their area the option to apply for a local disabled driver parking permit, meaning the Blue Badge is not on display while the motorist is parked in their local area.

At present, a Blue Badge can be used in any vehicle in which the badge holder is travelling and must only be displayed where the parking concessions are being used or while the badge holder is travelling in the vehicle, ensuring that enforcement officers can carry out their duties. This is a requirement of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000.

■ Bus Services: Transport for London**Sarah Olney:**[\[21318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason Transport for London is required to undertake a review of its bus services in July 2021; and what assessment he has made of the level of accuracy of such an exercise being undertaken before passenger numbers have recovered to a stable level due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

In June the Government agreed a third extraordinary funding and financing package for Transport for London (TfL) worth around £1.08bn. As part of this deal, the Mayor has agreed to carry out a review of service levels. This review is aimed at generating a range of service options to efficiently manage services and associated costs to support the achievement of financial sustainability by the target date of April 2023.

We will continue to monitor passenger demand over this period to accurately assess service levels and keep Londoners moving.

■ Department for Transport: Training**Philip Davies:**[\[19550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, on Unconscious bias training, what steps he has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in his Department.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In response to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, the Department has stopped providing interventions where the evidence does not support their continued use, this has been the case with unconscious bias training.

Most of Civil Service unconscious bias training was delivered via an e-learning platform, and is no longer available through this platform. The Department no longer promotes unconscious bias training to be included as part of any other training that is delivered elsewhere.

The Department is committed to maintaining a strong focus on diversity and inclusion. This includes deploying a range of evidence-based interventions within the Department, for example training to improve fairness in recruitment decisions, or new learning offerings targeted at working on creating more inclusive work cultures. We are using data to inform where bias may be occurring and to help eradicate it, for example in our approach to recruitment. This approach will allow us to ensure that activity can be focused on those interventions which do make a difference in order to progress this important work.

■ **East Midlands Railway: Recruitment**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[20382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of East Midlands Railways' plans to recruit and train drivers ahead of the introduction of the 16 May 2021 timetable.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

East Midlands Railway and Network Rail are conducting reviews into why the plans to uplift Regional Services in May proved unsustainable, and an assessment of staffing plans will be part of this which will be shared with the Department.

■ **East Midlands Railway: Timetables**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[20379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he or his officials have had with East Midlands Railway on the decision to remove services from the Regional Routes timetable introduced on 16 May 2021.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

East Midlands Railway reinstated 100 per cent of its Regional route services on 16 May. The operation of this timetable has not proved to be robust due to the introduction of different fleet, traincrew issues and sickness which East Midlands Railway communicated to officials and key stakeholders in early June. East Midlands Railway's proposal to scale back the advertised service to one that could be reliably delivered was discussed in advance with the Department.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[20380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what compensation will be payable to season ticket holders on East Midlands Railway affected by service reductions introduced via the temporary timetable introduced on 19 June 2021.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The reduction in services via the temporary timetable, sees the number of East Midlands Railway's regional service provided each day similar to the numbers provided prior to its reinstatement in May, therefore there is no plan to compensate season ticket holders.

Lilian Greenwood:[\[20381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial penalties East Midlands Railway will be subject to in response to their failure to operate the new timetable introduced with effect from 16 May 2021.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The information and actions taken by East Midlands Railway will be evidenced and form part of the processes in considering its next Performance Based Fee payment.

■ Electric Vehicles: Costs**Damian Hinds:**[\[19568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will conduct and publish an analysis of the monthly costs of ownership and operation of electric cars compared to petrol and diesel cars, based on indicative model types and scenarios of usage.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has no current plans to publish such regular analysis. The monthly cost of electric vehicle ownership will depend on the vehicle type, the driver's recharging pattern and usage.

We will continue to support industry and motorists to make the switch to zero emission vehicles. Phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 will put the UK on course to be the G7 country that will decarbonise cars and vans fastest. We expect total cost of ownership to reach price parity during the 2020s, compared to petrol and diesel cars.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies**Emma Hardy:**[\[20493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of HGV driver shortages on (a) the road haulage industry and (b) the timely supply of goods and food; and pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 13206 on Visas: Large Goods Vehicle Drivers, what plans his Department has to promote jobs, training, and other initiatives to get more people into HGV driving.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has held regular meetings with the road haulage industry regarding driver shortages and its impact on supply chains, including a roundtable with ministers.

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.

■ London-Brighton Railway Line: Tickets

Caroline Lucas:

[\[19564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what comparative assessment he has made of the benefits and savings available to commuters travelling from Brighton to London and back in a day using (a) a flexible season season ticket and (b) single tickets with a network card; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The flexible season ticket is a national product, priced to provide better value and convenience for commuters travelling two to three days a week.

For most 2 and 3 day a week commuters, the flexible season ticket will offer savings against buying daily tickets or traditional seasons, provided that they are following this commuting pattern.

For those with different commuting patterns, existing tickets such as traditional seasons or dailies may be the best choice.

Commuters should always consider which product best suits their journey and travel pattern. This is easier than ever with the updated season ticket calculator.

■ Members: Correspondence

Chris Stephens:

[\[R\]](#) [\[20441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Glasgow South West of 29 March 2021 and 8 June 2021 on the industrial dispute within the DVLA; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department responded to your letter of 29 March on 9 April, and your letter of 8 June on 25 June. Copies of both are in the attached documents.

Attachments:

1. Chris Stephens - DVLA and PCS letter [Chris Stephens MP - DVLA and PCS letter.pdf]
2. Chris Stephens - DVLA letter [Chris Stephens MP - DVLA letter.pdf]

■ Northwich Station: Disability**Mike Amesbury:** [\[20500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will prioritise Northwich Railway Station for the Access For All programme in respect of the rebuild of part of the station following its recent collapse.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Office of Rail and Road is currently undertaking an investigation into the recent collapse, which will report back to Network Rail shortly. Whenever any work is carried out at a station by the industry when they install, replace or renew infrastructure, it must comply with the relevant accessibility standards.

Also, I shall be bidding for further rounds of funding for Access for All schemes in the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Parking: Pedestrian Areas**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[21145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons he has not published a response to his Department's consultation on managing pavement parking, which closed in November 2020; and when he plans to publish a response to that consultation.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department received over 15,000 responses to the consultation. We are carefully considering the consultation findings and will be publishing a response when we have completed this work, which is a priority.

■ Railways: Portishead**Dr Liam Fox:** [\[19485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on reopening the Portishead railway line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Reopening the railway line from Bristol to Portishead is being led and funded by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council as Phase 1B of MetroWest. The Department for Transport has committed to make a capped funding contribution of £31.9m towards the scheme. My Department expects to receive the Planning Inspectorate's recommendation regarding the scheme's Development Consent Order shortly and on which the Secretary of State will need to give his decision.

■ Railways: Season Tickets**Peter Kyle:** [\[21298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimates he has made of the potential uptake of flexible season tickets in the first year they are in use (a) between Hove and London Terminals and (b) across the networks.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government has introduced new flexible season tickets across England, tickets are on sale now and will become available for travel from 28 June 2021.

Passenger demand has fallen significantly since March 2020 due to restrictions put in place in response to COVID-19. Due to this, the uptake of flexible season tickets is uncertain. However, we do expect the savings offered to encourage and support flexible working patterns.

Railways: Suicide**Kenny MacAskill:****[19710]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have died by suicide on the railways in each quarter since 2015.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Quarterly statistics are not available. ORR publish National Statistics on annual suicides or suspected suicides on mainline rail and the London Underground:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/health-and-safety/rail-safety/>

Railways: Tickets**Virginia Crosbie:****[20571]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to introduce a railcard for NHS staff allowing discounted travel on the rail network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department recognises the vitally important role NHS and other keyworkers have played in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there are currently no plans to extend or launch any new railcards at this time.

Railways: West Midlands**Daniel Kawczynski:****[19556]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential (a) timescale for delivery, (b) cost to the public purse and (c) fiscal merits of a railway track upgrade that would reduce the time to travel between Shrewsbury and Birmingham to 45 minutes.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Midlands Connect is currently developing proposals to improve journey times between Birmingham and Shrewsbury. Its recommendations will be presented later this year in a strategic outline business case. This will assess the infrastructure enhancements required, timescales for delivery, costs, and financial benefits of the scheme. No formal assessment has been made by the Department ahead of their expected submission.

■ Road Traffic

Catherine West: [\[21305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Transport Decarbonisation Plan will include targets to halt and reverse the growth of road traffic.

Rachel Maclean:

We will shortly publish a bold and ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan that will set out a credible pathway to deliver transport's contribution to carbon budgets and meeting net zero by 2050. This will set out the measures needed to accelerate modal shift to public and active transport making them the natural first choice for our daily activities.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Ms Karen Buck: [\[18464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the amounts paid out under the Pothole Action Fund by (a) region and (b) nation of the UK in 2020-21.

Rachel Maclean:

The Pothole Action Fund, announced in 2016, was for local roads in England outside London, as that has a separate funding arrangement. The other nations of the UK receive a share of any new funding through the Barnett Formula.

For 2020/21, the Pothole Action Fund (£50 million in 2020/21) was combined with the Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund (£100 million) and the new £2.5 billion Potholes Fund announced at Budget 2020 (£500 million). This £650 million funding was allocated by formula, and paid to local highway authorities in England, outside London.

The allocations were published in the Roads Funding Information Pack which is at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-funding-information-pack/roads-funding-information-pack>.

■ Shipping: Coronavirus

Mike Kane: [\[R\] \[18530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Table SFR0303 of the Seafarers in the UK Shipping Industry statistics, published on 24 February 2021, what proportion of (a) UK, (b) EEA and (c) non-EEA seafarers in each seafarer type has received at least one shot of vaccine against covid-19; and if he will outline the procedures in place to monitor covid-19 vaccination rates in countries supplying labour to the UK shipping industry.

Robert Courts:

A person's occupation is not recorded when administering the Covid-19 vaccination. Seafarers in the UK are being vaccinated as part of the general population, with all adults aged 18 and over now eligible. Proof of Covid vaccination is not required to obtain a permit to work in the UK maritime sector.

■ Shipping: Costs

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[21339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of trends in the level of maritime shipping costs in the last six months.

Robert Courts:

Shipping costs have risen during 2021 to a high level on a global basis as a result of supply and demand factors in international freight markets.

Unprecedented levels of demand are being driven by changes to consumer behaviors worldwide during the pandemic. Historical trends in the shipping sector are of pricing peaks and troughs, and it is expected that pricing levels will similarly re-adjust when the current demand drivers change. However, industry estimates are that high levels of demand will continue throughout 2021.

■ Transport for London: Season Tickets

Stephen Hammond:

[R] [\[21174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has held discussions with Transport for London representatives on flexible season tickets for London Travelcards zones 1-8.

Rachel Maclean:

Transport in London is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London, including for fare-setting. Flexible season tickets are a rail-only product that are being introduced across England.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[20467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether officials in his Department are taking steps with international counterparts to introduce an international covid-19 vaccine passport to enable the safe resumption of travel.

Robert Courts:

As set out in the Global Travel Taskforce report, our ambition is to have a system in place to facilitate travel certification for international travel. Any solution for international travel certification needs to be user friendly, interoperable with various other systems and able to facilitate a quick interaction at the border. We are continuing to progress work to explore the testing of technology solutions with multilateral organisations and international partners to ensure these can operate effectively at scale as international travel recovers.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[20468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of making targeted financial support available for travel businesses for as long as covid-19 restrictions continue to remain in place for the travel industry.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances aviation and associated business face as a result of Covid-19. Firms, across the economy, that are experiencing difficulties have been able to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor. This includes support through loan guarantees, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The extension of Government-backed loans and furlough payments announced at the Budget build on the support package available and will help ensure this vital and vibrant part of the UK economy is ready to bounce back in the wake of the pandemic.

We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

Travel: Disability**Rachael Maskell:**[\[19623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to e-scooter pilot projects, what steps he is taking to ensure that accessible forms of active travel are piloted and available to disabled people.

Rachel Maclean:

I have taken a keen interest in the trials and how e-scooters may affect those with disabilities and accessibility needs.

As e-scooters have the potential to offer an additional means of transport, we did allow seated e-scooters within the scope of the trials to enable people with certain mobility issues to use them. However, local authorities control how the trials run in their areas and appoint e-scooter operators and none of the local authorities or operators involved have chosen to trial a seated e-scooter model. One e-scooter operator is planning to trial a device adapted from an e-scooter to give wheelchair users access to the experience of using an e-scooter and will share results with the Department.

TREASURY**Banks: Closures****Anne Marie Morris:**[\[20604\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with relevant stakeholders on the closure of high street bank branches and the potential effect of those closures on businesses that deposit cash.

John Glen:

Treasury ministers and officials engage with stakeholders on a variety of issues. However, the decision to close a branch is a commercial issue for banks and building

societies and the Government does not intervene in these decisions or make direct assessments of the impact of closures.

However, the Government also firmly believes that the impact of branch closures should be understood, considered and mitigated where possible so that all customers and businesses continue to have access to banking services. That is why the Government continues to be supportive of the Access to Banking Standard which commits firms to ensure customers are well informed about branch closures, the bank's reasons for closure and options for continued access to banking services. Alternative options for access include the Post Office, which allows 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers to carry out their everyday banking at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

In September 2020, the Financial Conduct Authority also published guidance setting out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches or the number of free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of a planned closure on their personal and small business customers' everyday banking and cash access needs, and other relevant branch services and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This will ensure the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly.

The Government also recognises that cash is important to the daily lives of millions of individuals and businesses across the UK. I have announced that the Government will consult this summer on further legislative proposals for protecting access to cash for the long term.

■ Business Banking Resolution Service

Alison Thewliss: [\[20425\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to expand the eligibility criteria for the Business Banking Resolution Service.

Alison Thewliss: [\[20426\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to increase the number of banks participating in the Business Banking Resolution service.

John Glen:

The Government welcomes the recent launch of Business Banking Resolution Service (BBRS), a free and independent service designed to settle unresolved complaints from SMEs about their bank.

The Government has set out high level guidance regarding what the BBRS should look to achieve. In 2018, the then Chancellor wrote to the BBRS signalling that for the scheme to bring closure it is vital that it considers as many complaints as possible, but also that it is right the scheme focuses on providing resolution to SMEs who have not had anywhere independent to take their complaint. Beyond this high-level

guidance, it is not for the Government to comment on specific details about the eligibility of a voluntary, non-governmental service.

On increasing the number of banks participating in the BBRS, the service launched with 7 founding banks who make up the majority of the UK banking sector, and it is understood that the BBRS hopes additional lenders will join over time. It is not for Government to mandate participation in an industry-led, independent organisation.

■ Children: Day Care

Tulip Siddiq: [\[21301\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) forecast expenditure and (b) actual expenditure for the tax-free childcare scheme in the financial year 2020-21.

Steve Barclay:

At the Spring 2020 budget, the forecast expenditure for Tax-Free Childcare in 2020/21 was £0.34bn. Tax-Free Childcare expenditure in 2020/21 was £0.24bn.

■ Debt Respite Scheme

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[21300\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will include advance payments under universal credit in the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space).

John Glen:

The breathing space scheme launched on 4 May 2021, and includes most personal debts and debts owed to Government, including Universal Credit overpayments. The Government considers that, for breathing space to be successful, it needs to include a wide range of debts.

The Government recognises the importance of including all Universal Credit debts in breathing space, and is committed to including Universal Credit advances within the scheme as soon as possible.

This will happen at a later date to ensure that the significant IT changes the Department for Work and Pensions needs to make do not compromise the safe delivery of Universal Credit, which is now supporting 6 million people. It has always been possible to defer repayments of Universal Credit Advances for 3 months in cases of hardship. In addition, from April 2021, the timeframe for the repayment of advances has been extended from 12 months to 24 months.

■ Directors: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney: [\[21319\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of limited company directors who have been unable to access the Government's covid-19 financial support schemes; and what plans he has to support those directors.

Jesse Norman:

The roadmap for lifting restrictions set out by the Government is under way, and will allow the economy to reopen, demand to increase and life to slowly return to normal. The Government has confirmed that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will be closing at the end of September 2021 and the Government will maintain its focus on helping people back into work.

The Government acknowledges that it has not been possible to support everyone as they might want, and that some of the rules, criteria and conditions needed to ensure that the schemes worked for the vast majority have meant that some people did not qualify. However, the Government has acted in line with its policy principles to target support at those who need it most and to protect public money against fraud, error and abuse, while reaching as many people as possible.

The Government has explored a range of options to support COMs who pay themselves through dividends. However, HMRC do not have the data to identify the population of directors who remunerate themselves through dividends. The 3.3 million population of people who receive income from dividends includes working directors but also inactive directors, such as the spouses or children of working directors who are jointly listed as directors of companies, and general investors. Given that some external estimates suggest an active director population which varies from 710,000 to 1.8 million, providing financial support to the entire 3.3 million population could result in more than three out of four grants going to people to whom support is not intended. This would be neither a fair nor responsible use of taxpayers' money.

HMRC also do not have data to verify what parts of a director's remuneration to support and therefore the amount of support to which they might be entitled. Dividend income could be coming from multiple sources including investments, and not just dividends in lieu of salary.

As COMs are not self-employed, they cannot qualify for the SEISS. However, those who pay themselves a salary through PAYE from their own company may be eligible for the CJRS. Those ineligible for the CJRS and SEISS may still be eligible for other financial support, including the Restart Grant of up to £18,000 and the extension of the temporary £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance for a further six months. The Government announced a £500 one-off payment to provide support to eligible Working Tax Credit claimants. All this builds on an existing package with spending of over £407 billion.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Rachel Reeves:**[\[21198\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his oral contribution of 22 June 2021, Official Report, column 751, if he will place in the Library the evidential basis for his

statement that the UK now has more rapid charging points per mile than any country in Europe other than Norway.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Chancellor's claim, made on 22 June 2021, is based on statistics provided by the European Alternative Fuels Observatory (www.eafo.eu). Their statistics show that compared with mainland European countries the UK has more high-powered, or 'fast' (22kW+) chargepoints per 100km of highway than any other country, with the exception of Norway.

When compared with all European countries (EU and EFTA), Iceland, which has a significantly smaller road network with only 13,034 km of road compared with 424,083km in the UK, also has more chargepoints per 100km than the UK. The Chancellor will issue a Ministerial Correction to correct the record in due course.

■ **House Insurance**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[21169\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of increased insurance premiums on home owners as a result of damage to their property resulting from a neighbouring property being in disrepair.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[21170\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department will take to support home owners whose insurance premiums are increasing as a result of damage to their property caused by a neighbouring property being in disrepair.

John Glen:

Insurers must treat customers fairly and firms are required to do so under the Financial Conduct Authority's rules.

Insurers make decisions about the terms on which they will offer cover following an assessment of the relevant risks. The Government does not intend to intervene in these commercial decisions by insurers as this could damage competition in the market. This competition is important and leads to better products and lower prices for consumers.

It is worth noting that different insurers may take a different view and customers are encouraged to shop around for the most suitable cover at the best price.

■ **Infrastructure**

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[21354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Infrastructure and Projects Authority plans to publish an updated version of the National Infrastructure Delivery Plan, last published in March 2016.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's first ever National Infrastructure Strategy published in autumn 2020 sets out plans to transform UK infrastructure. The National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline and the Transforming Infrastructure Performance: Roadmap to 2030 documents to be published in 2021 will set out forthcoming projects and policies. The Spending Review in the autumn will set out the Government's plans for investment.

■ Infrastructure: Finance**Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[21353\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timetable is for publication of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority's next iteration of the National Infrastructure and Construction Procurement Pipeline, last published on 16 June 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority publishes a National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline annually, subject to Ministerial approval. The last Pipeline was published in response to COVID-19 and set out planned procurements with an estimated contract value of up to £37bn across the 2020/21 financial year. The next iteration of the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline will be published later this year and will set out future investment alongside planned procurements.

■ Leisure: VAT**Alex Norris:**[\[20489\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether visitor attractions which include gym elements, such as adventure climbing centres, are eligible for the temporary reduced rate of VAT of 5% on admissions.

Jesse Norman:

The temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism was introduced on 15 July 2020 in order to support the cash flow and viability of businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

For the purposes of this relief, attractions include admission to shows, theatres, circuses, fairs, amusement parks, concerts, museums, zoos, cinemas, exhibitions and similar events. While HMRC would need to assess the facts of each case individually, admissions to attractions which include gym elements, such as adventure climbing centres, included as a part of the entry fee to the whole attraction would be eligible for the temporary reduced rate of VAT of 5 per cent.

■ Net Zero Review

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[20472\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 3084 on Net Zero Review, when he plans to publish the final report of his Department's Net Zero Review.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury's Net Zero Review final report will be published in due course, and in advance of COP26.

It will be an analytical report that uses existing data to explore the key issues and trade-offs as the UK decarbonises. Against a backdrop of significant uncertainty on technology and costs, as well as changes to the economy over the next 30 years, it focuses on the potential exposure of households and sectors to the transition, and highlights factors to be taken into account in designing policy that will allocate costs over this time horizon. In line with the Review's terms of reference, the report will not include policy recommendations.

The Review forms part of a cross-government effort to support the UK's transition to net zero. The government's Net Zero Strategy will be published later this year.

■ Red Diesel: Excise Duties

Andrew Percy:

[\[20368\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to support Internal Drainage Boards negatively affected as a result of the removal the the withdrawal of the red diesel fuel duty rebate from April 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises that the changes to the tax treatment of red diesel from April 2022 may affect some public sector bodies, including Internal Drainage Boards, but these changes are designed to incentivise greater energy efficiency and the switch to more environmentally friendly alternatives in the public and private sectors. The Treasury will discuss spending pressures that may arise in the public sector as part of the next Spending Review.

The Government takes flood risk very seriously. That is why it has doubled the amount it invests in flood and coastal defences to £5.2 billion by 2027.

■ Research: Finance

Cat Smith:

[\[20607\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria his Department plans to use for the allocation of the £22 billion of funding for research and development announced in the Queen's Speech 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

Many government departments and agencies fund and undertake Research & Development. Decisions on R&D spending beyond 2021-22 will be taken as part of the next Spending Review.

The Government carefully considers its plans to spend public money and how best to ensure value for the taxpayer. Regular spending reviews set budgets across all government departments and provide an opportunity to take a systematic view across all spending.

Further details about the Spending Review will be set out in due course.

■ Social Security Benefits: EU Countries**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[21148\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has taken steps to establish exemption rules with the EU for cross-border workers during the covid-19 pandemic from Article SSC.12 of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement Protocol on Social Security Coordination.

Mr Nicholas Brown:[\[21149\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether there have been bilateral discussions between the UK Government and individual EU states on cross-border workers, similar to agreements between France and partners on exemptions to Article 13 of EC Regulation 883/2004.

Jesse Norman:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has been working with the EU to protect the social security position of workers moving between the UK and the EU. Reciprocal arrangements have been put in place covering all EU member states which allow HMRC to disregard changes to individuals' work locations caused solely by COVID-related restrictions when deciding where these workers pay their social security contributions.

This includes multi-state workers who are covered by Article 13 of Regulation (EC) 883/2004 under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement or by Article SSC.12 of the Protocol on Social Security Coordination in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

WALES**■ Environment Protection: Wales****Ruth Jones:**[\[20525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the COP29 President on promoting a green recovery from the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales.

Simon Hart:

I have had a number of discussions with the COP26 President Designate about the opportunities that exist in Wales to support the drive to net zero, including as part of the COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group, which I last attended on 10 June.

The UK Government is actively progressing plans to deliver a Green Industrial Revolution that drives the transition to net zero and levels up across the UK. The Prime Minister set out his ambitious 10 Point Plan back in November, which will mobilise £12 billion of UK Government investment to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs across the UK, and spur over three times as much private sector investment by 2030.

As I set out in the UK Government's Plan for Wales, Wales is at the heart of this agenda. We have backed the South Wales Industrial Cluster with £21.5 million to develop detailed plans to support the region's net zero transition. We are supporting floating offshore wind, which has the potential to deliver significant supply chain benefits to South Wales and beyond, with a range of policy measures. In addition, we have committed £15.9 million to pioneer low-carbon transport technologies in Cwmbran.

We recognise there is more to do and will bring forward a Net Zero Strategy and plans to decarbonise buildings and transport later this year, which will present further opportunities to the people of Newport West, wider South East Wales and beyond.

■ Immigration: Wales**Ruth Jones:**[\[19676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on extending 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).

There are no plans to extend the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) by those EU citizens and their family members resident in the UK by the end of the transition period.

For those who are eligible who have not applied before 30 June, this Government will not simply turn off support for people.

We understand there will be valid reasons why a small proportion of those eligible have not applied before the deadline, as we have set out in our reasonable ground guidance. It is our priority to ensure we continue to support people who are eligible to apply and anyone who is eligible who has still not applied should make a late application as soon as possible.

The end of the grace period will mean fundamental changes, for both EU citizens living in the UK and vice versa. The UK Government is committed to supporting our EU friends, family and neighbours wishing to remain in the UK after 30 June through these changes.

Ruth Jones:

[\[19690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the uptake of the EU Settlement Scheme.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with the Welsh Government on a wide range of subjects including the EU settlement scheme (EUSS).

As of May 2021, the Home Office received 92,700 applications through the EU Settlement Scheme from EEA citizens living in Wales.

■ **Regional Planning and Development: Science and Research**

Ruth Jones:

[\[20526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has with Cabinet colleagues on prioritising science and research as part of the application of the levelling up agenda in the regions and nations of the UK.

Simon Hart:

The Government recognises the important role science and research will play in levelling up across the UK. That is why the UK Government is investing record amounts across the UK and is committed to reaching a target spend of 2.4% of GDP on research and development by 2027.

I have regular discussions with BEIS and UKRI on a wide range of subjects, including science and research within Wales. My Department is working across government to ensure our ambitions deliver for the whole of the UK and utilise Wales' creativity, determination and distinctive innovation expertise as we build back greener. UKRI has invested £84.8m in Wales through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to address current and future societal challenges being faced by businesses. In addition, the Compound Semiconductor Cluster has received £25m through the Strength in Places Fund, and we have provided £20m to the South Wales Industrial Cluster to explore routes to decarbonisation.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ **Gender Recognition: International Recognition**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[18598\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had on self-identification legislation for trans people with her counterparts in (a) Argentina as co-Chair of the Equal Rights Coalition, (b) Ireland, (c) Malta, (d) Belgium, (e) Portugal, (f) Denmark, and (g) Norway.

Kemi Badenoch:

The UK is committed to working with our international partners to promote and protect the rights of LGBT people.

We work closely with Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) member states, including Argentina as co-chairs, to share best practice on LGBT rights and plan to launch the Five Year Strategy and Implementation Plan to advance LGBT equality at an ERC conference on 6 and 7 July 2021. The Implementation Plan is based on international best practice and urges ERC member states to “provide legal gender recognition through an accessible, quick, and transparent administrative process and without abusive requirements (including sterilization, divorce, treatment or diagnostic) as a minimum standard.”

We also regularly share best practice on a range of issues with the Council of Europe’s LGBTI Focal Points Network (EFPN) member states.

■ Minister for Women and Equalities: Freedom of Information

Fleur Anderson: [\[20551\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department operates a red, amber and green rating system for categorising Freedom of Information requests according to their presentational sensitivity.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Equality Hub does not operate a traffic light system for FOIs.

All FOI requests are treated exactly the same, regardless of who the request is from and their occupation.

■ Minister for Women and Equalities: Written Questions

Marsha De Cordova: [\[18592\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to respond Question 14209, tabled by the hon. Member for Battersea on 11 June 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to [Question 14209](#).

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Rachael Maskell: [\[901872\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential merits of introducing social prescribing welfare support for people in receipt of benefits from her Department.

Justin Tomlinson:

Social Prescribing can connect people with community groups and agencies for practical, social and emotional support. Our work coaches play an important role in signposting our customers to other forms of support available to them in their communities.

Our forthcoming Health and Disability Green Paper will explore ways to improve the benefits system, increase opportunities for employment and help more people to lead independent lives.

■ Carers Allowance**Rachael Maskell:**[\[21281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the level at which carers allowance is paid; and what plans she has to increase the level at which carers allowance is paid.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Hon member to the answer I gave on 10 June 2021 to question number [10503](#).

■ Children: Day Care**Dawn Butler:**[\[18505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to provide support for families who are struggling with the cost of childcare.

Will Quince:

The Department is fully committed to supporting parents with moving into work and improving their earnings once employed. Universal Credit (UC) childcare costs provides more generous childcare support than was available under Tax Credits, reimbursing up to 85% of eligible childcare costs up to a monthly cap as opposed to 70% under tax credits.

UC childcare aligns with the wider government childcare offer. This includes the free childcare offer which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare in England for all 3 and 4 year olds and disadvantaged 2 year olds, doubling for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours a week. The UC childcare cost element can be used to top up a claimant's eligible free childcare hours if more hours are worked and childcare is required. This means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work.

■ Children: Disadvantaged**Robert Halfon:**[\[901865\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on support for vulnerable children.

Will Quince:

The Secretary of State frequently meets with counterparts across Government to discuss a range of issues, including how we can support families and vulnerable children, so we can deliver on our clear manifesto commitment to reduce child poverty.

Just last week, we announced the extension of the Covid Local Support Grant to 30th September, with a further £160 million of support to be delivered across England and primarily targeted at vulnerable families with children.

■ Industrial Injuries: Hearing Impairment**Lilian Greenwood:****[20383]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to make occupational hearing loss reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Mims Davies:

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) are made under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and apply to all sectors and workplaces in Great Britain.

The 2013 regulations clarified and simplified the list of reportable ill-health conditions (occupational diseases), as a result of a recommendation made by Professor Löfstedt in his report “ [Reclaiming health and safety for all: An independent review of health and safety \(legislation\)](#),” published in 2011.

HSE keeps the regulations, including the specified injuries and reportable diseases under review. The list of current reportable occupational diseases will be considered as part of the next formal post-implementation review of RIDDOR, which is due to report in 2023. Reporting of occupational noise induced hearing loss will be considered as part of this.

Lilian Greenwood:**[21193]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to record the effect of occupational hearing loss nationally.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has no plans to record the effect of occupational hearing loss nationally.

HSE publishes information recorded by other agencies about occupational hearing loss in relation to Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) and the Labour Force Survey, available from the statistics section of HSE’s website (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/deafness/index.htm> and <https://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/statistics.htm>).

HSE also sponsors the THOR-GP project, a programme of research into the wider incidence of occupational disease being undertaken at the University of Manchester,

which includes occupational hearing loss (<http://research.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/epidemiology/COEH/research/thorgp/>).

■ Liverpool Victoria

Gareth Thomas: [21134]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many letters she has received on the proposed demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [21136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department holds information relating to the views of the With-Profits Committee of Liverpool Victoria on the proposed demutualisation and sale to Bain Capital; and if he will make a statement.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has received one email about the impact of the proposed demutualisation and sale of LV= (Liverpool and Victoria) on the company's occupational pension scheme. No further information on the proposed transaction is held by the Department.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Ms Karen Buck: [21140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims for which the local housing allowance did not cover rent were subject to deductions for (a) universal credit advances, (b) universal credit overpayments and (c) tax credit overpayments in February 2021.

Will Quince:

a) There were 311,000 claims for which the Local Housing Allowance did not cover rent that had a Universal Credit Advance Deduction. This accounts for 6% of households on Universal Credit.

b) There were 57,000 claims for which the Local Housing Allowance did not cover rent that had a Universal Credit Overpayment Deduction. This accounts for 1% of households on Universal Credit.

c) There were 110,000 claims for which the Local Housing Allowance did not cover rent that had a Tax Credit Overpayment Deduction. This accounts for 2% of households on Universal Credit.

Claimants can also apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from their local authority if they need additional support to meet housing costs. We have provided over £1 billion in DHP funding since 2011 to support thousands of families and local authorities are able to top up payments up to 2.5 times their allocation.

Notes:

Figures are provisional and are subject to retrospective change as later data becomes available.

Claim numbers may not match official statistics caseloads due to small methodological differences.

■ Personal Income

Christine Jardine: [\[901864\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of introducing a universal basic income.

Will Quince:

The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with the Chancellor on this issue. This government does not believe a Universal Basic Income has merit, as it does not target provision according to people's needs and circumstances, which would inevitably lead to an inefficient use of public funds.

■ Post Office Card Account: Wales

Hywel Williams: [\[20591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment has she made of the number of people in (a) Arfon (b) Wales who will no longer receive payments through Post Office Card Accounts.

Guy Opperman:

We do not hold information on Post Office card account customers in specific geographical areas.

The Department is committed to supporting customers to access their benefit and pension payments as we transform our Payment Exception Services. When the Post Office card account contract ends nobody will be left without a means to access to their benefits or pension. A Payment Exception Service will continue to be in place for those who are unable to provide a standard account.

The Department has put in place a dedicated experienced team, the Financial Inclusion Customer Contact Centre, to support all Post Office Card Account customers to update their payment details to a standard account. The team can answer questions about the payment change and signpost customers to impartial financial advice if they need help to identify a suitable alternative account.

■ Social Security Benefits

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[21211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many internal process reviews have been (a) started and (b) completed on cases of death or serious harm since July 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

Internal Process Reviews (IPRs) are internal retrospective investigations, focussed on organisational learning. They are not designed to identify or apportion blame (where engaged, a Coroner has responsibility for concluding the cause of death).

IPRs are conducted when:

o there is a suggestion or allegation that the Department's actions or omissions may have negatively contributed to the customer's circumstances, or cases in which the department may be able to learn about the operation of its processes, AND a customer has suffered serious harm, has died (including by suicide), or where we have reason to believe there has been an attempted suicide.

o the Department is asked to participate in an external Safeguarding Adults Board, or is named as an Interested Party at an Inquest. An Internal Process Review will be conducted - regardless of whether there is an allegation against the Department.

Of those IPRs that have been started since July 2019, those relevant to the question's criteria are as follows:

DEATH*	97
Serious Harm**	27

Of those IPRs that have been completed since July 2019, those relevant to the question's criteria are as follows:

DEATH*	54
Serious Harm**	8

* Death includes the categories death, alleged suicide and confirmed suicide.

** Serious Harm includes the categories self-harm, serious harm, attempted suicide and 'other'.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Rosie Duffield:

[\[21320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 16930, Social Security Benefits: Appeals, if her Department will publish the conclusions of their research and analysis to understand the consequences of newly introduced benefit assessment channels.

Justin Tomlinson:

Findings from the Department's programme of research and analysis to understand the consequences of the newly introduced assessment channels will be made available via outputs published on gov.uk. We expect to publish findings from a 2020 telephone survey of PIP and UC/ESA claimants who received a telephone assessment shortly.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**Virginia Crosbie:****[20570]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her plans for a Health and Disability Green Paper, what steps her Department has taken to engage disabled people in discussions on how the benefits system is working in preparation for publication of that Paper; what plans he had to incorporate disabled people's insights from the consultation into the recommendation of that paper; and what her timescale is for publication of that Paper.

Justin Tomlinson:

It is vital that the voices of disabled people are at the centre of health and disability policy development. Over the past 18 months I have personally led a series of events in which I have heard directly from disabled people about their lived experiences with the benefits system. The forthcoming Health and Disability Green Paper will reflect themes coming out of those conversations and ask for views on how best to address them.

Given the necessary focus on the departmental response to Covid-19, we are working to a longer timescale than previously anticipated. We will continue the engagement with disabled people and their representatives and plan to publish the formal consultation document in the coming months.

■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals**Neil Coyle:****[21241]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that citizens from EU member states living in the UK and in receipt of in-work social security payments, including universal credit do not stop receiving support after 1 July 2021 if (a) their application for the EU Settlement Scheme has not been resolved and (b) they have not applied to that scheme.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the honourable member of Bermondsey and Old Southwark to my previous response on this subject : [UIN 19715](#)

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses**Ian Byrne:****[21360]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will bring forward measures to remove the six-month rule, which forces terminally ill people to prove how long they have left to live in order to access fast-track support.

Justin Tomlinson:

The DWP announced in July 2019 that it would consider how the benefit system supports people nearing the end of their life. The DWP has conducted a wide ranging evaluation which considered the views of claimants, stakeholders and clinicians on how it supports those nearing the end of their lives. The evaluation has shown that

there are three key areas for the Department to consider: a consensus to change the six-month rule; improving consistency with other services used by people nearing the end of their lives; and raising awareness of the support that is available. 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.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Age**

Peter Aldous:

[\[21891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has plans undertake a review of the state pension age in accordance with the provisions of section 27 of the Pensions Act 2014.

Guy Opperman:

Yes. The statutory deadline for the publication of the next Government Review of State Pension age is May 2023.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Overseas Aid: Children and Mothers

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[17726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much ODA his Department allocated to ending the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children; and what the definition of spending on that commitment was in each year between 2015 and 2019.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 22 June 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Wendy Morton:

The most up to date UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) were published in the ~~British Medical~~ **BMJ Global Health** Journal with data analysis provided by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), using the internationally accepted Muskoka2 methodology. These are found here:
<https://gh.bmj.com/content/6/6/e006089.full>

The LSHTM Muskoka2 estimates show FCDO spend, adjusted for inflation, as:

- £1,084 million on RMNCH in 2015
- £1,025 million on RMNCH in 2016
- £1,138 million on RMNCH in 2017
- £1,130 million on RMNCH in 2018
- £1,116 million on RMNCH in 2019

We previously stated FCDO spent approximately £1 billion per year on RMNCH between 2013 - 2017. These figures were based on the preceding Muskoka1 methodology and were not adjusted for inflation.

HOME OFFICE

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[19654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens settled in (a) Birmingham, Edgbaston, (b) Birmingham and (c) the West Midlands have (i) applied for, (ii) been granted, and (iii) not applied for settled or pre-settled status.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 24 June 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics'.

Data on the number of applications and concluded applications by UK local authority to 31 March 2021 are published in Tables EUSS_LA_01, EUSS_LA_02 and EUSS_LA_03 of the quarterly EUSS statistics local authority tables, which can be found at:

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, March 2021 – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EUSS and cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of EU citizens in the UK.

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

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

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WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Events Research Programme Update**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Oliver Dowden):

[[HCWS127](#)]

On 25 June, the Government published a report on the first phase of its ground-breaking and science-led Events Research Programme (ERP) which is furthering our understanding of how the risk of COVID-19 transmission can be reduced at large events.

The study gathered data on behaviour, movement, ventilation and testing and has shown that with mitigating factors, such as social distancing at pinch points, face coverings and staggered entry and exit times, events can be conducted more safely at increased capacities, while maintaining a lower risk of transmission.

The ERP was commissioned by the Prime Minister in February 2021 as part of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown.

The aim of the review was to build an evidence base to inform how the public could return as safely as possible to attend events such as sport, theatre, live music and business events by conducting pilots across a range of settings and sectors. These have been run in a structured, scientifically and ethically robust way to enable events in the programme to happen at a scale not previously tested since the start of the pandemic.

Phase I of the programme involved a total of 58,000 participants at venues across the country including Liverpool, Sheffield and London. It was supported by event organisers, local authority and public health teams, national and local government officials and nine scientific research teams from five UK universities. The work was overseen by an independently-chaired science and ethics board.

The findings in this report will help to inform both Government and industry on how they can seek to mitigate Covid-19 transmission risk ahead of Step 4 of the roadmap.

A full copy of the report can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). A copy of the report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ **Reporting contingent liabilities in relation to cancellation compensation for event organisers participating in phase three of the Events Research Programme**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Oliver Dowden):

[[HCWS129](#)]

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of all members of this House to bring to their attention the Departmental Minute issued today that provides the House with notice of a series of small contingent liabilities created by my Department. This is in relation to a policy to compensate event organisers participating in phase three of the Events

Research Programme in the event of their cancellation if public health concerns were to give rise.

The world-leading Events Research Programme conducted 14 pilot events across two phases since April to inform decisions around the safe removal of social distancing at Step 4 of the Roadmap up to 20th June 2021. Following the delay to Step 4, the government will now run a third phase. This will provide the opportunity to gather and generate stronger data that consolidates our evidence base in order to safely get spectators back to events when restrictions are able to lift, including trialling the practical use of certification at a range of events.

The government will provide compensation on a discretionary basis to event organisers should a pilot event be cancelled due to public health reasons.

This compensation will be capped at £300,000 per event and will cover costs incurred in relation to participation in the programme only (e.g. admission of spectators), recognising the fact that these events would have taken place in line with roadmap restrictions should the programme not exist. For events that have been put on specifically as part of the programme (i.e. would not otherwise have gone ahead), the government will compensate organisers in full should an event be cancelled, but this will also be capped at £300,000.

The government does not intend to cancel any event in the programme, however public safety comes first and therefore it is prudent to provide this assurance to the organisers assisting the government in reopening the economy.

A copy of the Departmental Minute is being placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Supporting Tourism in England

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): [\[HCWS128\]](#)

As England opens up and more Britons seek to go on holiday there over the summer, the Government wants to support domestic tourism. To do this, we will encourage greater temporary campsite capacity over the summer through updated guidance.

Last year the Government introduced a temporary permitted development right which allows for the temporary use of land as a commercial campsite for up to 56 days, without the need to apply for planning permission. This allows businesses across the tourism and hospitality sectors to establish temporary 'pop up' campsites on their land to meet additional demand. We would like to see more of these businesses taking advantage of this opportunity over the summer, so we will encourage local planning authorities to take a flexible and proportionate approach to the enforcement of planning controls, including restrictions through planning conditions on existing campsites, which may limit the temporary extension of commercial campsites for leisure use over this holiday season. This builds on my previous statement made to the House on 14 July 2020.

Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework already emphasises that planning enforcement is a discretionary activity and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control.

The purpose of this Written Ministerial Statement, which comes into effect immediately, is therefore to make clear that, in considering the exercise of their discretion over enforcement, local planning authorities should take a positive approach to their engagement with commercial campsites for leisure use to ensure planning controls are not a barrier to local tourism and hospitality's economic recovery.

In particular, unless legal obligations dictate otherwise, local authorities should not seek to undertake enforcement action against potential breaches of planning control in relation to temporary commercial campsites for leisure use which do not have an adverse impact on amenity, public health and safety or the environment.

This statement does not apply to other forms of campsites, including those for domestic use, and this statement does not stop local authorities taking appropriate action where there are significant adverse impacts on amenity, public health and safety or the environment. This position should not stop enforcement action against unauthorised encampments (such as tents or caravans) on land which the occupiers do not have permission of the landowner to camp upon, nor for non-commercial activity such as a personal dwelling.

Furthermore, this statement does not remove the legal requirement for campsite licenses under section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936. The Government will work with local authorities to facilitate a quick licensing process this summer, and authorities are encouraged to expedite new applications for licences to provide certainty for applicants.

This Written Ministerial Statement only covers England and expires on 31 October 2021.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ The UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement

Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss): [\[HCWS124\]](#)

Today, the Government will launch negotiations with Singapore towards a bilateral digital trade agreement, the UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (DEA).

Singapore and the UK are both global leaders in the digital economy, and our bilateral trade was worth £17 billion in 2019, with 70% of services exports digitally delivered.

This new, ambitious agreement will aim to remove barriers to digital trade and enable UK exporters to expand into high-tech markets. It is part of the Government's strategy to place the UK at the centre of a network of modern free trade agreements with dynamic countries, and to enhance our status as a global hub for services and digital trade.

The UK is the first European country to start negotiations on a digital trade agreement. This is an opportunity for the UK to take the lead in shaping these agreements, and grow our influence on global rules in areas of UK strength such as digital and services. It

reflects how the UK is becoming more flexible, more nimble and less defensive in our approach to trade. The UK is already one of the world's biggest exporters of services, with remotely delivered services exports worth £207 billion in 2019 alone. International digital trade is now a key driver of productivity and business growth in the UK. It allows British businesses to reach a wider consumer base by selling online, to trade more efficiently and cost-effectively by streamlining shipping, logistics and other trading processes, and to connect and grow their workforce across different regions of the world – sharing the benefits of prosperity.

The DEA can expand the UK's access to Singapore's digital economy – worth an estimated £9.4 billion in 2019. Negotiations will focus on:

- Securing open digital markets for exporters, allowing them to expand into new markets and sell traditional products in new ways.
- Ensuring free and trusted cross-border data flows, while upholding high standards of personal data protection.
- Cutting red tape for UK businesses by promoting digital trading systems such as digital customs and border procedures that will save time and money when exporting.
- Upholding online consumer rights and protecting businesses' valuable intellectual property, like source code and cryptography.
- Deepening our cooperation on future growth sectors such as fintech and lawtech, while working with Singapore to strengthen our collective cybersecurity capabilities and keep our countries safe.

Strengthening our trading relationship with Singapore is also part of the Government's wider trade strategy, which aims to deepen links with one of the fastest growing regions of the world, partnering with countries who believe in free and fair trade.

The DEA can create new opportunities as a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region for tech, high-end services, and digital trade, ultimately supporting and creating high-value jobs across the United Kingdom and helping the country build back better from Covid.

JUSTICE

■ Probation reform

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):
[\[HCWS126\]](#)

This government is committed to cutting crime, by improving how we protect the public from serious offenders and by tackling repeat offending. On Saturday 26 June we took a key step forward in delivering those aims with the launch of a new unified Probation Service for England and Wales. The additional investment of an extra £155m both last year and this year has been key to making these changes happen.

The new Service brings together staff from the previous National Probation Service (NPS) and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). It will strengthen public protection by bringing together management of offenders of all levels of risk into one organisation. It will deliver visible punishment and reparation to communities through an overhauled approach to unpaid work. And it will strengthen rehabilitation by delivering improved better accredited programmes and other rehabilitative interventions, alongside commissioning specialist services from other organisations. New National Standards for probation will set out expectations for how offenders are managed in order to reduce repeat offending and to ensure the public are protected.

I am grateful for the hard work and professionalism of probation staff in supporting the transition to the new Service, as a result of which we have successfully transferred nearly 8,000 staff and nearly 200 buildings to the new organisation and rolled out IT equipment for staff transferring.

Investment of £195m has now been awarded to 26 organisations across England and Wales to provide those specialist services, addressing needs relating to Accommodation, Education, Training and Employment, services which help offenders with personal issues such as mental health problems and Women's services.

Having completed the transition to the new organisation, my priority is now to deliver improvements in the services probation delivers. Key work to do so includes improving sentence management by recruiting a record 1,000 new trainees last year and a further 1,500 officers this financial year to supervise offenders and help cut crime. This will reduce the average caseload size for probation officers so that the public can be better protected.

Other key work includes ensuring more support for victims of crime by extending and enhancing the service offered to victims. Creating a new framework for unpaid work placements will increase the value they bring to society, by cleaning up the environment and supporting communities, giving back to the communities they live in through litter picking, clearing fly tipping, removing graffiti and maintaining public spaces.

Further investment in digital services will help modernise the service, speeding up processes and helping to underpin and reinforce excellent standards of practice. I will improve support for offenders for issues like education, substance misuse and mental health issues to reduce the risk of them reoffending. Securing additional rehabilitative services to build on the contracts already implemented will help cut crime.

It is particularly impressive that we have been able to ensure readiness for transition, given the pressures faced as a result of the global pandemic. Unification represents an example of excellent delivery - a major, very complex Government project delivered on time, to budget against unprecedented global challenges and we are proud of the scale of that achievement. Our progress in delivering these crucial reforms will ensure a joined-up and improved Probation Service that is able to make a significant contribution to this Government's mission to cut crime. We are determined that the Probation Service will simultaneously offer more support to those turning their backs on crime, while using

every available tool to protect the public from those who are intent on continuing to commit crime.

TRANSPORT

■ **Government response to the consultation on environmental objectives for the spaceflight regulator under the Space Industry Act 2018**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Rachel Maclean):
[\[HCWS125\]](#)

On Friday 25 June, I published the Government's response to consultation on environmental objectives and guidance that the Government is setting for the regulator when exercising its spaceflight functions under the Space Industry Act 2018.

This Government is committed to growing the space industry in the UK and cementing our leading role in this sector by unlocking a new era in commercial spaceflight across the UK. The Government's ambitious support for safe and sustainable spaceflight activities will drive research, innovation and entrepreneurship, exploiting the unique environment of space. The environmental objectives and guidance, along with the Space Industry Regulations, and other instruments covering accident investigation and appeals, will pave the way for a new licensing regime for commercial spaceflight activities from UK. This will feed into our emerging National Space Strategy as we develop our priorities for levelling-up the UK and promote the growth of this thriving sector in the long term.

The environmental objectives demonstrate the importance this Government attaches to balancing the mitigation of potentially negative environmental impacts of spaceflight activities with enhancing the strong contributions that commercial spaceflight can make to both the economy and our local and global efforts to monitor the environment. The objectives and guidance build on the Space Industry Act 2018 requirements for applicants for a launch or spaceport licence to submit an assessment of environmental effects as part of their application. The objectives and guidance set out clearly how the Government expects the spaceflight regulator will take account of these assessments when deciding licence applications and setting licence conditions.

The Government welcomes the thoughtful and detailed responses received to the consultation from industry, environmental professional bodies and other stakeholders. The response I am sharing today sets out the ways we have adjusted the draft guidance to reflect the suggestions and recommendations made through the consultation process. We believe that this collaborative approach will not only strengthen the licensing regime we are implementing, but also demonstrates the Government's on-going commitment to growing this exciting sector whilst ensuring that the most significant environmental impacts are mitigated and that growth of this sector is consistent with the Government's wider sustainable development goals.

Next steps

My Department has worked closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the UK Space Agency and Civil Aviation Authority to legislate for a

wide range of new commercial spaceflight technologies, including traditional vertically launched vehicles, air-launched vehicles and sub-orbital spaceplanes and balloons. The Government's aim is to have in place all the necessary secondary legislation and supporting guidance before the summer recess to enable the regulator to begin receiving and assessing applications.