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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

■ Aerospace Industry: Quality Control

Jane Stevenson: [\[22024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what financial impact assessment he has made of the effect on UK manufacturing companies of obtaining AS9100 certification.

Paul Scully:

The Government has not made a financial impact assessment of the effect on UK manufacturing companies of obtaining AS9100 certification. This is an industry standard rather than a regulatory requirement.

The UK has been at the forefront of aviation for more than 100 years. Our Aerospace Sector is a world leader in the design, manufacture and aftercare of some of the highest value products on aircraft – wings, engines and advanced systems.

Aerospace companies in the UK work to the highest quality and standards which ensures the world leading standing of our Aerospace sector.

■ Coronavirus: Disinfectants

Rachael Maskell: [\[20445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to ensure hand sanitiser manufacturers provide clear information on the labels of their products on whether those products kill the covid-19 virus.

Paul Scully:

BEIS has no plans to place additional requirements on manufacturers of hand sanitiser.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Theresa Villiers: [\[19517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many covid-19 vaccine doses will be available for booster jabs to be given in September and October 2021.

Theresa Villiers: [\[19518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many covid-19 vaccine doses he has ordered for a booster jab programme in autumn 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has confirmed we are preparing for a booster programme to take place later this year. We have secured early access to 397 million vaccines doses through supply agreements with six separate vaccine developers, of which four have

been approved for use and three are currently in deployment. This includes agreements with:

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

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

Final decisions on what a booster programme would look like – including which vaccines will be used - will depend on the data from ongoing clinical trials, such as the COV-Boost trial, and advice from the independent medical experts at the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Training**

Philip Davies:

[\[19543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, what steps he has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in his Department.

Amanda Solloway:

The Written Ministerial Statement referred to in the question can be seen here:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-12-15/hcws652>.

Since the removal of Unconscious Bias training from the core Civil Service learning offer in January 2021, BEIS no longer monitors activity or provides reports on completion.

Unconscious Bias is not on BEIS's list of mandatory training courses and is not part of our forthcoming Diversity & Inclusion Curriculum.

Unconscious Bias training does not form part of BEIS's Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

Ian Mearns:

[\[21884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Green Homes Grant scheme and the latest data release of 24 June 2021, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the difference between the number of vouchers issued and the number of measures actually installed; and what assessment he

has made of the main challenges with delivery of measures under that scheme once a voucher has been issued.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Official statistics published on 24 June for the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme describe installations completed prior to 03 June. More installations are being completed every day.

As per the release, 59,704 vouchers, worth over £273 million, have been issued (excluding those that have expired). 20,557 measures have been installed, giving a conversion rate of 34.4%.

Once a voucher has been issued, it is the responsibility of the customer and installer to schedule the installation and ensure work is undertaken. Installations for some measures will take longer and vary based on the size and structure of the property, along with the timing of the installation.

Vouchers continue to be issued with a three-month validity period. To ensure measures are installed as quickly as possible, we have also updated voucher extension policy for the scheme.

The Department regularly reviews information about the number of vouchers that have been issued and how many installations have been completed and vouchers paid. We are in frequent discussion with the scheme administrator in relation to this and maintain regular contact with stakeholders to understand possible issues and delays.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme: Planning Permission**

Darren Henry:

[\[19718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether planning permission is required for works undertaken as part of the Green Homes Grant Scheme for properties that are not in a conservation area.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is fully committed to encouraging homeowners to incorporate energy efficiency measures in their properties, to tackle climate change.

In order to be eligible for funding under the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme, applicants must have obtained the necessary consents and permissions from all relevant authorities and parties to install measures in their property. This is specified in the scheme's Customer Terms and Conditions.

Furthermore, all works completed under the scheme must be compliant with building regulations and standards.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Jeremy Hunt:

[21850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish data on UK emissions (a) in total, (b) per PPP\$ of GDP and (c) in comparison with each G20 country in each of the last five years.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS publishes absolute GHG emissions estimates, on a territorial basis, annually. Our latest final version is [here](#) (to 2019) [1] and our latest provisional version is [here](#) (to 2020) [2].

BEIS does not publish anything directly related to emissions per PPP\$ of GDP. There are other resources available online, including:

- ONS [emissions by intensity](#) [3] and associated [intensity by industry](#) [4], derived from residency based emissions statistics
- ONS [UK Environmental accounts](#) [5]
- ONS report on [decoupling economic growth from carbon emissions](#) [6]
- [World Bank Indicators](#) covering both GDP PPP\$ and climate change [7]

Not all G20 countries publish emissions estimates annually, so it is not possible to provide a direct comparison between the UK and all members of the G20. However, the statistical release accompanying our annual statistics publication referenced earlier ([here](#), [8]), does contain an "International Comparison" section, on page 24, which sets out where UK emissions sit relative to other G20 countries. Additionally, the UNFCCC website contains National Inventory GHG submissions from each country [here](#). [9]

References

[1] **2019 UK greenhouse gas emissions: final figures - statistical release** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics>

[2] **2020 UK greenhouse gas emissions: provisional figures - statistical release** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics>

[3] **Greenhouse gas emissions intensity, UK: 2018 provisional estimates** <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/greenhousegasintensityprovisionalestimatesuk/2018provisionalestimates>

[4] **Atmospheric emissions: greenhouse gas emissions intensity by industry** <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/datasets/ukenvironmentalaccountsatmosphericemissionsgreenhousegasemissionsintensitybyeconomicsectorunitedkingdom>

[5] **UK Environmental Accounts: 2021**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/ukenvironmentalaccounts/2021>

[6] **The decoupling of economic growth from carbon emissions: UK evidence**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/october2019/thedecouplingofeconomicgrowthfromcarbonemissionsukevidence>

[7] **The World Bank Data Indicators**

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/>

[8] **2019 UK greenhouse gas emissions: final figures - statistical release**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957887/2019_Final_greenhouse_gas_emissions_statistical_release.pdf

[9] **UNFCCC National Inventory Submissions 2021**

<https://unfccc.int/ghg-inventories-annex-i-parties/2021>

■ Heating: Housing

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[21797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2021 to Question 7076, what steps his Department is taking to support the 20 per cent of off-gas grid homes that are not suited to being heated by a heat pump.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Support to transition away from fossil fuel heating is currently available through the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (DRHI). Eligible technologies include biomass boilers and pellet stoves, as well as heat pumps. The DRHI is scheduled to close in 2022, however we have consulted on plans for a Clean Heat Grant (CHG) scheme, that will provide upfront grants for the installation of low carbon heating systems, including biomass boilers. Further information on scheme design and eligibility criteria will be set out in the government response to the consultation later this year.

Support for high temperature heat pumps is also available through the DRHI and the planned CHG. High temperature heat pumps may be suitable for use in properties that have a higher heat demand or where it is not appropriate to change the radiators or use under-floor heating.

From early 2022, the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) will provide support to low income off gas grid households by installing energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating. The Sustainable Warmth Competition guidance sets out the expected approach for Local Authorities installing low carbon heating using HUG funding. Where low temperature heat pumps are unsuitable, alternative low carbon heating technologies may be installed if justification can be provided as to how they meet deliverability, value for money, affordability, sustainability, and air quality considerations.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[21798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2021 to Question 7077, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of expanding the Clean Heat Grant Scheme to incentivise the deployment of BioLPG in off grid homes where heat pumps are either unsuitable or cost prohibited.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BioLPG is not widely available to domestic consumers at present. The Clean Heat Grant aims to provide support that will maintain existing low-carbon heat supply chains from April 2022 and so the technologies it will support need to be readily deployable now. It will take time to gather the evidence needed to consider what future role biofuels could play in the decarbonisation of heat, and to develop the policy framework which would support such a role. This process is underway though the Biomass Strategy call for evidence. Biomass boilers are being supported as an alternative to heat pumps within the Clean Heat Grant, providing certain eligibility requirements are met.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[21799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2021 to Question 7075, was estimate he has made of the average cost of installing a heat pump to a typical rural off gas grid domestic property.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS analysis indicates that air source heat pumps would currently cost around £12,000 to install for an average fossil fuel heated home off the gas grid. This includes the upfront cost of the heat pump unit, tanks and cylinders, controls, retrofit of radiators, and installation costs.

Evidence from market research and industry engagement suggests that mass deployment of heat pumps in the UK could lead to a significant reduction in upfront costs for domestic-sized systems due to economies of scale and other efficiencies.

In order to ease consumer costs, the Government has been providing financial support through schemes such as the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive. In addition, from April 2022, the Clean Heat Grant will provide support to off gas grid households switching to low carbon heating, and the Home Upgrade Grant scheme will provide support to low income off grid households installing energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating.

The Government is developing options for how a long-term framework of policy approaches, including regulation, can combine to provide a clear direction-of-travel for industry and accelerate the uptake of low-carbon heat, including growing the heat pump market to 600,000 installations per year by 2028. Alongside the publication of the Heat and Building Strategy, we are planning to consult on new regulations to phase out fossil fuel heating in homes, businesses, and public buildings off the gas grid.

■ **Holiday Leave**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[20598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that umbrella companies do not withhold holiday pay from workers.

Paul Scully:

The Government has committed to expand state enforcement for agency workers to cover umbrella companies and enforcement of holiday pay for vulnerable workers. This will enable inspectors to investigate relevant complaints involving umbrella companies (such as the withholding of holiday pay) and take action where necessary. This will require primary legislation, which the Government will bring forward in due course.

■ **Intellectual Property: Writers**

Patrick Grady:

[\[21932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Society of Authors on the future of the exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime.

Amanda Solloway:

The Intellectual Property Office (an executive agency of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) who are responsible for the exhaustion regime has not yet specifically met with the Society of Authors on this matter. The Government has engaged with stakeholders across the publishing sector and continues to do so as part of the public consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime.

The Government welcomes views from businesses and consumers and encourages interested parties to respond to the consultation document.

Patrick Grady:

[\[21933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of protecting UK author income as part of his Department's review of the future of the exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is currently consulting on the options for the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. Once the consultation has concluded, the Government will then assess evidence provided during the ongoing policy development process and consultation so that a decision may be made.

The Government welcomes all interested parties to contribute to the consultation.

■ Post Office: ICT**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[21837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 19503 on Post Office: ICT, what the average payment has been to sub-postmasters through the Historic Settlement Scheme.

Paul Scully:

Some 400 early payments have been made in respect of lower value claims from the Historical Shortfall Scheme. Since these are not representative of the scheme as a whole average data is not yet available. I have asked Post Office Limited to consider options for the publication of headline scheme data.

■ Research: Publishing**Chi Onwurah:** [\[19579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Open Access policy review, what progress UKRI has made on reaching the outcome of that review; and when UKRI plans to (a) make decisions in respect of that review and (b) publish the outcome of that review.

Chi Onwurah: [\[19580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Open Access policy review and the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the research sector, if he will ensure that UKRI provides (a) researchers, (b) institutions and (c) publishers adequate time to implement the outcome of the review.

Amanda Solloway:

The UKRI Open Access Review has included a series of consultation stages and analysis. The final policy recommendations are now moving through the final agreement process and the outcomes of the Review will be published as soon as the process is complete. It is anticipated that these will be published this summer.

I recognise the pandemic's impact on the research sector, and the ability of the research sector to adapt to any new arrangements has been an important consideration throughout the UKRI Open Access Review. I can assure you that this has been taken into account in the formation of the policy and implementation considerations.

For peer-reviewed research articles the proposed policy start date will be 1 April 2022, while the policy for monographs is proposed to start from 1 January 2024. UKRI will work closely with stakeholders in the lead up to the policy start dates to ensure any questions or issues are addressed.

Chi Onwurah: [\[21212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of UKRI on the progress of the open access

policy review and the likelihood of the outcome of that review establishing a permissive policy for researchers.

Amanda Solloway:

There has been Ministerial engagement throughout the UKRI open access review.

Ensuring open access policy is as permissive as possible for researchers whilst also achieving public value and affordability, and taking account of the changing landscape in publishing agreements in the UK are all key considerations of the review.

■ **Spaceflight: Licensing**

Carol Monaghan: [\[20438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merit of a limit on the indemnity and liability required by UK space launch and satellite operations licensees.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government conducted a call for evidence in March 2018. The evidence gained through this exercise and through further independent research commissioned by the Government has led Ministers to conclude that limits of liability are justified. The Government intends to calculate launch liability limits using the Modelled Insurance Requirement (MIR) approach. This will tailor the amount of insurance required and limit of operator liability to the risk and the diverse range of UK launch activities today and anticipated in the future and reduce operator costs in general compared with a fixed limit.

The Government does not yet have the information to determine whether a maximum limit on the insurance requirement and limit of operator liability for the amount calculated under the MIR for launch is justified as licence applications have not yet been received. It is the Government's intention to establish a committee involving industry and the spaceflight regulator to keep the regulations under review and ensure that they remain current, relevant, and effective.

For orbital operations, the limits of operator liability for licences under the Space Industry Act will mirror those for licences issued under the Outer Space Act 1986.

- For standard missions, the limit will be set at €60 million.
- For high risk missions the limit will be set on a case-by case basis, following an appropriate risk assessment.

Carol Monaghan: [\[20439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his department will amend Section 36 of the Space Industry Act in line with the Government's stated intent so that space launch and satellite operations licenses will contain a limit of liability.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government will limit launch liability limits using the Modelled Insurance Requirement (MIR) approach. This will tailor the level of insurance required and the limit of operator liability to the risk and the diverse range of UK launch activities today and anticipated in the future and reduce operator costs in general compared with a fixed limit.

For orbital operations, the limits of operator liability for licences under the Space Industry Act will mirror those for licences issued under the Outer Space Act 1986

- For standard missions, the liability limit will be set at €60 million.
- For high risk missions the liability limit will be set on a case-by case basis, following an appropriate risk assessment.

It is the Government's intention that all operator licences issued under the Space Industry Act 2018 will contain a limit of operator liability with respect to claims under section 34 and 36 of the Space Industry Act. The Government does not intend to make changes to the primary legislation around liabilities and insurance in the Space Industry Act (2018) at this time, as the regulations and guidance laid before Parliament on 24th May 2021 contain the necessary provisions to enable implementation of the Government policy that all operator licences will contain a limit of liability.

However, the Government outlined in its response to the consultation on the draft Space Industry Regulations issued on 5th March 2021 that if suitable primary legislation is brought forward, the Government may seek to amend the wording in section 12(2) of the Space Industry Act 2018 from "may" to "must".

The Government is committed to supporting the space sector and we have outlined our intention to establish a committee involving industry and the spaceflight regulator; this will keep the regulations under review and ensure that the Government's approach to commercial spaceflight remains current, relevant, and effective.

Carol Monaghan:[\[20440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a cap on the unlimited liability required by UK space launch and satellite operations licensees.

Amanda Solloway:

All operator licences issued under the Space industry Act 2018 will contain a limit of operator liability with respect to claims under section 34 and 36 of the Space Industry Act.

The Government intends to calculate launch liability limits using the Modelled Insurance Requirement (MIR) approach. This will tailor the insurance required to the risk and the diverse range of UK launch activities today and anticipated in the future and reduce operator costs in general compared with a fixed limit.

For orbital operations, the limits of operator liability for licences under the Space Industry Act will mirror those for licences issued under the Outer Space Act 1986:

- For standard missions, the liability limit will be set at €60 million.
- For high risk missions the liability limit will be set on a case-by case basis, following an appropriate risk assessment.

Operators will therefore not be facing unlimited liability for actions carried out in compliance with the Space Industry Act 2018 and licence conditions.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information

Cat Smith:

[21941]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has referred any freedom of information requests received by his Department to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in the past 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>.

■ Cabinet Office: Training

Philip Davies:

[19539]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, what steps he has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in his Department.

Philip Davies: [\[19547\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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.

Philip Davies: [\[19554\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, on Unconscious bias training, what steps he has taken to ensure the phasing out of unconscious bias training for civil servants in Government departments.

Philip Davies: [\[19555\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, on Unconscious bias training, what progress has been made on ensuring that (a) local government, (b) the police, (c) the NHS and (d) other parts of the public sector review their approaches to staff training as a result of the evidence and developments in the Civil Service.

Julia Lopez:

Unconscious bias training courses were removed from the Civil Service cross-Civil Service curriculum in January 2021. The Cabinet Office also took action to remove unconscious bias training from any relevant learning and related materials. The [Written Ministerial Statement](#) on this was communicated to all departments.

The Civil Service is committed to maintaining a strong focus on diversity and inclusion. A review of existing learning is being conducted to ensure new learning utilises evidence-based interventions. The government expects other parts of the public sector to review their approaches in light of the evidence and developments in the Civil Service.

■ Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[20456\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure his public communications on covid-19 over summer 2021 are effective.

Julia Lopez:

The cross-government COVID-19 public information campaign is our primary method for communicating what businesses and the public need to do to keep safe, stop the spread of the virus and protect the NHS. Cabinet Office continuously monitors effectiveness of our communications and gains insight on public awareness to maximise impact. Our campaign has reached 95% of adults on average 17 times per week. Regular communication has maintained high levels of public engagement for over 15 months, with an average of 84% aware of and up to 82% trusting in the information in government advertising. Up to 90% of people have also adopted key

behaviours, such as opening their windows to let fresh air in when they have visitors over.

The Government will continue to make every effort to communicate the latest COVID-19 policy and guidance as clearly and simply as possible. All updated guidance is also published on GOV.UK.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[16996]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether covid-19 infections and hospitalisations among people who have been offered but refused to accept a covid-19 vaccine will be included in the data when deciding whether to ease restrictions on 19 July 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

The move to Step 4 will be based on the four tests outlined in the roadmap. The first of these tests - that the vaccine deployment programme continues successfully - will consider vaccine coverage across regions and demographics and ethnicity groups. The third of these tests - that infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS - looks at data on hospital admissions, patients in hospitals, and their vaccines status, in order to assess the likely pressure on the NHS in coming months.

The Delta variant is already driving the growth we are seeing in infection rates and hospitalisations, and at the same time non-COVID emergency demand on the NHS is the highest it has been since the start of the pandemic. The Government has consistently followed the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advice on vaccine deployment. We have implemented a range of initiatives to drive vaccine uptake, and to mitigate the impact of the Delta variant in areas of concern. Data on the number of COVID-19 vaccinations provided by the NHS in England can be accessed here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations>.

■ **Coronavirus: Public Inquiries**

Marsha De Cordova:

[21333]

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 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.

■ Death

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[20316\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many excess deaths there have been in (a) England and (b) UK in each of the last ten years.

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[20317\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what methodology his Department uses when calculating excess deaths.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ20316-7 [UKSA's final response to PQ20316_20317.pdf]

■ Festivals and Special Occasions: Coronavirus

Duncan Baker: [\[17854\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will (a) update the guidance for significant life events including christenings and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs as part of Step 3 of the covid-19 roadmap and (b) clarify limits on the number of guests permitted to attend those events; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of aligning that guidance with the removal of the cap on maximum guest limits for weddings, civil partnerships, receptions, wakes, funerals and other commemorative events.

Gill Furniss: [\[19649\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of easing covid-19 restrictions on christenings on 21 June 2021 in line with weddings and funerals.

Penny Mordaunt:

Guidance on significant life events, such as baptisms and bar mitzvahs, is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) as part of the guidance for the safe use of places of worship. This guidance is kept under continual review, and the government continues to work with its Places of Worship Taskforce and faith leaders to review and amend this guidance, as necessary.

If significant life events take place as part of communal worship, participation is limited by the capacity of the venue, in line with the wider rules on communal worship. If significant life events take place as standalone events, there is a limit of up to 30 people (indoors or outdoors, excluding inside private homes). Anyone working is not included in this limit.

From 21 June, there is no longer a maximum number cap for attendees at wedding or civil partnership ceremonies and receptions set out in law. Many people have

planned for wedding or civil partnership ceremonies and receptions a long time in advance, and these types of events can be difficult to book and to cancel. They often require aligning multiple businesses, sometimes years in advance, and can have a significant social and economic cost. The exact number of attendees will be based on the COVID-19 risk assessment of each venue or outdoor space, and measures put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19.

■ G7: Cornwall

Luke Pollard: [\[14210\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a train had been booked for his travel to Cornwall for the G7.

Luke Pollard: [\[14211\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons he travelled to Cornwall by air rather than by train to attend the G7 summit.

Julia Lopez:

I am responding on behalf of the Prime Minister's Office. Ministers are required to make essential visits across the country for official government business. The security authorities allow for a wide variety of transport in order for this to be done safely and efficiently.

The Prime Minister set out the target for the G7 Summit to be sustainable and carbon neutral. The Summit has now received independent ISO20121 certification, the highest international standard for sustainable event management.

The Summit Carbon Management Plan includes offsetting all Leaders' travel, investing in sustainability projects in developing countries which are independently verified by the Gold Standard Impact Registry. The plan is being updated as we continue to assess the full output from the Summit.

■ Members: Correspondence

Tim Loughton: [\[3788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to correspondence and repeat correspondence sent to Lord Frost on matters raised by businesses in the East Worthing and Shoreham constituency related to trade with EU countries sent on 28 January 2021, 5 February 2021, 9 February 2021, 11 February 2021, 25 March 2021 and 31 March 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

I apologise for the delay in responding to the important points my Hon. friend has raised on behalf of his constituents. We recognise the great importance of the effective and timely handling of correspondence.

The letter received on 5 February 2021 has been passed to the Department for International Trade, as the Department best placed to provide a helpful response.

Lord Frost has now responded to the letter dated 25 March, and Lord Agnew has responded to letters dated 22 January, 26 January, 9 February and 11 February.

Lord Agnew will be responding to the remaining letters, dated 22 January and 31 March. I would like to reassure my Hon. friend that responses are in progress and will be issued as soon as possible.

■ UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[15447\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 171772 on UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with (a) the European Commission and (b) individual EU member states on instances in which parcels or packets coming directly from Northern Ireland into the EU have been incorrectly required to have CN22 customers labels.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has worked with parcel operators to ensure processes are set up such that importing EU countries should be clear that goods from Northern Ireland should not face customs processes. Where instances of non-compliance with the Protocol have been identified, we have been raising these issues with the Commission as part of our wider work to address outstanding issues with the Protocol, in order to minimise disruption to everyday lives in Northern Ireland.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[13131\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether, from 21 June 2021, weddings of any size will be able to take place, providing social distancing measures are put in place.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[13869\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on rates of covid-19 transmission of easing covid-19 restrictions on weddings on 21 June 2021 to allow more than 30 guests.

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[13980\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether covid-19 social distancing restrictions will remain in place for weddings after 21 June 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government announced a four-week pause at Step 3 of the roadmap following an assessment of the data against the four tests.

After carefully considering the potential impacts, on 14 June the Government announced that there will no longer be a maximum number cap for attendees at

wedding and civil partnerships, and receptions set out in law. From 21 June, the number of attendees at weddings, civil partnerships and receptions will be determined by how many people the venue or space can safely accommodate with social distancing measures in place.

The changes allow people to celebrate their union with their families and loved ones, and aligns the wedding sector with the way most other COVID Secure venues operate - such as restaurants and pubs - where social distancing determines a venue's capacity. Additionally, changes also bring commemorative events, such as wakes, in line with existing rules on funerals so people can say goodbye to those they have lost.

This change does not enable a wedding of any size to take place. To manage the risks around the virus the exact number of attendees will be based on the COVID-19 risk assessment of each venue or outdoor space, and measures put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19.

At Step 3, social distancing and COVID-secure rules apply to all businesses, venues and workplaces. While we feel it is safe to make some easements, we have not made the decision to move to Step 4. We will only lift remaining restrictions on weddings, civil partnerships and commemorative events when the decision is taken to move to the next stage of the roadmap. We know this pause will be disappointing to many people, including those planning weddings and other events, but we hope that these cautious changes will enable some more people to attend these special events.

We have published extensive guidance on wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations on GOV.UK, which can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-wedding-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-receptions-and-celebrations>

DEFENCE

■ France: Nuclear Weapons

Caroline Lucas: **[20360]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of the total forecast cost of the UK contribution to the Teutates programme has been spent to date.

Caroline Lucas: **[20361]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date the EPURE hydrodynamics facility is planned to become fully operational.

Jeremy Quin:

In accordance with the TEUTATES Treaty, the building, operating and dismantling costs will be shared equitably between the UK and France.

I am withholding specific information about costs and in-service dates as their release would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other States and constitute a breach of confidence.

■ Kenya: Counter-terrorism

Jim Shannon:

[20409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government is giving the Kenyan Government any military assistance to help defeat terrorism in areas of that country.

James Heapey:

Kenya is our strategic partner in East Africa and at the heart of our plans for the region. Kenya is a partner which shares the same concerns and aspirations we do regarding regional stability and security. We are committed to cooperation on tackling shared threats such as terrorism and violent extremism.

The UK provides support to the Kenyan Government in work to counter terrorism, this is through both counter-terrorism capacity building for its forces and through liaison officers in its regional hub of the FCDO/CONTEST Unit Counter Terrorism and Extremist Network in Nairobi.

We actively contribute to action against al Shabaab, the Al-Qaida linked terrorist group that poses a direct threat to UK interests and regional stability. We work jointly with Kenya to make it increasingly difficult for al Shabaab to operate.

■ Ministry of Defence: Freedom of Information

Florence Eshalomi:

[22064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many freedom of information requests has his Department referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence has referred requests to the Cabinet Office 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>

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[21835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what has been the level of total expenditure by his Department in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) Northern Ireland in each year between 2010 and 2020.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence publishes annually the *regional expenditure with UK industry and supported employment publication*, available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-regional-expenditure-with-uk-industry-and-supported-employment-index>

The Ministry of Defence previously provided estimates on both expenditure and employment within the [UK Defence Statistics \(UKDS\) publication](#). However, within the UKDS bulletins, the inclusion of the breakdowns for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were not given prior to 2013. It should also be noted that due to differing methodologies used across the years, historic figures are not directly comparable.

(£ million)

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Northern Ireland	122	127	106	110	114	120	83
Scotland	1,470	1,550	1,665	1,691	1,728	1,801	2,066
Wales	858	1,021	955	1,009	1,006	1,112	909

[1] Figures in this table are in constant 2019-20 prices and have been adjusted for inflation using GDP deflators from HM Treasury (September 2020).

■ Navy: Coronavirus

Carol Monaghan: [\[21944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Navy ships have had operations restricted as a result of covid-19 outbreaks amongst serving personnel.

James Heapey:

We do not comment on the operational status of Royal Navy (RN) ships. The RN has continued to meet all operational tasking throughout the pandemic.

■ Veterans: LGBT People

Carol Monaghan: [\[21945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is taking steps to identify LGBT+ veterans who may have been dismissed from the Armed Forces prior to 2000 on account of their sexuality but given other reasons for their dismissal.

Carol Monaghan: [\[21946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to grant pardons to LGBT+ veterans who were convicted on account of their (a) sexuality or (b) gender identity during the Armed Forces ban on homosexuality.

Carol Monaghan: [\[21947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to provide compensation to LGBT+ veterans who have lost (a) earnings and (b) pensions as a result of the former Armed Forces ban on homosexuality.

Carol Monaghan: [\[21948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will issue letters of apology to all LGBT+ veterans who suffered significant (a) emotional and (b) financial hardship as a result of the former Armed Forces ban on homosexuality.

Leo Docherty:

My predecessor as Minister for Defence People and Veterans publicly apologised for the historic treatment of the LGBT veteran community and I reiterate that this treatment was entirely unacceptable. LGBT personnel have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to the Armed Forces.

I am proud of this Government's record on improving equality. We made it possible for men with eligible historical convictions for decriminalised behaviours to apply to have their convictions disregarded and we are in the process of exploring how further Service Offences can be brought within the scope of the scheme to enable more veterans to benefit from it.

We have stated that we will go beyond existing actions in righting historic wrongs to the LGBT veteran community and I remain committed to doing so. Work is underway which will seek not only to understand and acknowledge the impacts of pre-millennium practices in the Armed Forces relating to gender identity and sexual orientation, but also where appropriate to address these impacts. We do not currently have plans to identify individuals.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts

Catherine West: [\[21988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to encourage growth in the creative industries.

Caroline Dinenage:

The creative industries contributed approximately £116bn to the UK economy in 2019. The Government has recognised the sector as one of the key sectors to drive growth across the country in the Chancellor's Plan for Growth.

We are actively supporting the creative industries through a range of initiatives such as:

- £4m towards the Creative Scale-Up programme which seeks to help creative businesses expand their operations.

- £39m towards the Creative Clusters programme through UKRI which connects businesses and academia to take advantage of the most recent research and innovations so they can grow.
- £33m towards the Audience of the Future which encouraged creative businesses to use innovative new technologies to reach new audiences.
- £20m towards the first round of the Cultural Development Fund to support business growth and productivity through investment in cultural and creative infrastructure via five projects in places like Wakefield and Worcester, in addition to a further £18.5m for a second round as part of the landmark Cultural Investment Fund, launched in May 2021.
- HMG committed over £2m to the Creative Careers Programme which aims to address aspirational and informational barriers to entry amongst young people and their carers. To date over 115,000 young people have engaged with the programme at over 1500 schools in England and Wales.
- Continuing to work with industry through the Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board to increase exports in the creative industries.
- The Government supports trade promotion in the CIs through DIT's export hubs, the Internationalisation Fund, the Export Academy. All this support will feature in the Creative Industries Export Campaign which will encourage both new exporters and companies wanting to look at new export markets to take advantage of the fantastic opportunities available to the UK as an independent trading nation.
- The Government is also looking carefully at options for an Export Office.

■ Biometrics: Public Places

Chi Onwurah:

[20403]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of deploying live facial recognition technology in public spaces on data protection and privacy.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The use of live facial recognition technology in public spaces by the police or non-law enforcement bodies must be lawful under the data protection legislation. The legislation recognises that biometric data such as facial images are sensitive in nature and are therefore subject to heightened safeguards. Processing by the police without the consent of individuals must be based on law and strictly necessary for a law enforcement purpose under Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018. Non-law enforcement bodies will generally need to show that processing without consent is necessary on grounds of substantial public interest under Article 9 of the UK GDPR, as supplemented by the conditions and safeguards in Schedule 1 to the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent regulator for data protection and is responsible for providing advice and guidance on compliance

with the UK's data protection laws. The Commissioner published an Opinion on the police's use of the technology on 31 October 2019. On 18 June 2020, the Information Commissioner published a second Opinion on the use of live facial recognition technology in public spaces. This can be found at: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/2619985/ico-opinion-the-use-of-lfr-in-public-places-20210618.pdf>. The Opinions explain the requirements of the legislation and stress that data protection and people's privacy must be at the heart of any decisions to deploy live facial recognition technology in public spaces.

■ **Broadband**

Chi Onwurah:

[20402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to maximise the uptake of next-generation gigabit broadband by consumers and businesses, to achieve the target of 85 per cent of the UK's population having access to it by 2025.

Matt Warman:

On 8 August 2020, the Government asked Which?, CBI and the Federation of Small Businesses to convene the Gigabit Take-up Advisory Group (GigaTAG) to undertake an evidence-based analysis of the barriers to take-up. The Advisory Group, which also included representatives from other organisations including Ofcom, the Broadband Stakeholder Group and the Internet Service Providers' Association, published its final report on 16 June 2021 which set out a number of recommendations to Government, Ofcom, industry and trade bodies.

Action is already planned by the respective bodies to whom some of the recommendations were directed at. Ofcom plans to work with industry to improve the consistency of broadband terminology and information in the market. BDUK plans to develop a 'Gigabit toolkit' to support local bodies in raising awareness and understanding of the benefits of gigabit connectivity among local residents and businesses.

The Government is now considering the Advisory Group's wider recommendations.

Chi Onwurah:

[20407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to include provisions in the proposed product security and telecommunications infrastructure Bill to speed up the process for agreeing wayleaves for gigabit-capable broadband rollout.

Matt Warman:

We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation on potential reforms to the Electronic Communications Code and will publish the Government response in due course. This will include proposals for measures to ensure that the Code continues to support the faster deployment of digital infrastructure. Any legislative measures will be taken forward in the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill.

■ **Broadband: Rural Areas**

Justin Madders:

[\[21254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the £825 million owed by BT to his Department following rural broadband upgrades has been returned; and how much of that funding has been re-invested to complete rural upgrades.

Matt Warman:

£825m is BT's current forecast of clawback repayments due over the terms of the respective contracts awarded under the Superfast programme, not a figure that is owed immediately.

Contractually, take-up clawback can be placed in an account held by the supplier for up to the full seven years of the contract's term. An early release of these clawbacks was agreed to be reinvested through the programme of up to £129m for the furtherance of the programme's objectives.

Returned funding beyond this will be apportioned to the public investors in each superfast contract across the country in line with contracted investment ratios and the public investors in turn will need to decide how they wish to utilise this funding.

■ **Culture Recovery Fund**

Ian Murray:

[\[21877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the eighth report of the Public Accounts Committee, COVID 19: Culture Recovery Fund published on 23 June 2021, what recent assessment he has made of the extent of the challenges experienced by (a) freelancers and (b) supply chain businesses in accessing the Culture Recovery Fund.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government recognises the significant challenge the current pandemic poses to our arts and creative sectors and to the many freelancers and supply chain businesses working across these industries and keeps cultural recovery policy under constant review.

Freelancers have been supported through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). SEISS has so far helped 2.8m self employed. Details on future SEISS support were announced by the Chancellor in his Budget Statement in March, with an extension of the scheme to September 2021. Around 500,000 people were brought into scope who filed a tax return in 2019-20, or were previously ineligible, who now may be able to claim the fourth grant.

However, it is also the case that the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) had significant indirect benefits for freelancers. In Round 2, organisations were asked to estimate how many FTEs and freelancers were protected by the fund until the end of June. Collectively, applicants reported that 52,000 full time staff and almost 100,000 freelancers would be supported until the end of June. And ALBs were able to

complement SEISS with their own interventions i.e. over £51m from ACE to individuals.

Similarly, supply chain organisations were eligible for the first and second rounds of the CRF and are recognised as a critical part of the sector. Many organisations have been funded through the CRF, including: Production Park, Wakefield and Adlib Audio Limited, Knowsley.

Additionally, the third round of the Culture Recovery Fund was announced on 25 June. This third and final round of funding will provide further support as the cultural, heritage and creative sectors move towards reopening at full capacity, underlining the government's commitment to help them build back better as life returns to normal.

Ian Murray: [\[21878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish data on the number of (a) freelancers and (b) supply chain businesses that are awaiting payments from the Culture Recovery Fund that were due from January 2021.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS and Arms Length Bodies categorise organisations by discipline, rather than position within the supply chain, and so we cannot provide the data requested.

We appreciate that grant payment delays can cause confusion and concern, however as of 24 June, 88% of CRF recipients have now received first round funding, and 72.6% have received second round funding. Culture Recovery Fund grant payments are typically made in multiple tranches, a first payment at the start of the grant period, followed by a final payment at the end of the period.

■ Data Protection

Chi Onwurah: [\[20398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure the public have control of their own data.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government is committed to making sure that the UK has high data protection standards and that people are confident that organisations will protect their personal data and only use it in an appropriate way.

All organisations in the UK that process personal data have to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The UK GDPR and the DPA provide people with a number of important rights including the right of access to their personal data, the right of rectification, the right of erasure, the right to restrict or object to the use of their personal data, the right to data portability and rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent regulator for data protection and is responsible for providing advice and guidance on compliance with the UK's data protection laws. Information about personal data rights can be found on the ICO's website at: <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>.

Anyone concerned about the handling of their personal data by an organisation can contact the ICO for further advice, on their helpline, 0303 123 1113 or through their livechat at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/live-chat/>. The ICO has a number of powers to tackle the unlawful processing of personal data, including the power to serve enforcement notices requiring organisations to stop the processing or to erase the data, and the power to serve civil monetary penalties.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Training

Philip Davies:

[19540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, what steps he has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in his Department.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Following the [Written Statement HCWS652](#), unconscious bias training was removed from DCMS's core learning offer from January 2021 and replaced by a new learning module for all staff on 'Inclusion in the Civil Service'. Unconscious bias training is no longer required to be completed by individuals serving on recruitment panels.

DCMS Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs) were made aware of this change and the new 'Inclusion in the Civil Service' course at a meeting of HR Directors on the 14th of January 2021.

■ Digital Technology: Security

Chi Onwurah:

[20396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to place obligations on online marketplaces as part of upcoming legislative proposals on ensuring products are secure-by-design.

Matt Warman:

All connected consumer products sold in the UK will have to comply with the cyber security requirements set out in the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill. Where a product is sold on a third party online marketplace, the seller will be responsible for ensuring that the product is compliant.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is taking forward a programme of work to ensure that major online marketplaces are playing their part to protect UK consumers from unsafe goods. As part of this, OPSS is reviewing the UK's product safety framework to ensure that it continues to deliver safety for consumers while supporting businesses to innovate and grow. The review is considering non-traditional business models, including online sales.

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

The Government will ensure that the approach taken to regulating the security of online products works with the broader approach to product safety adopted once the impact of these business models on safety have been appropriately reviewed.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Ian Murray: [\[21876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will introduce a Government-backed insurance indemnity package against the risk of cancellation for the festival industry.

Caroline Dinenge:

This Government recognises the importance of the UK's live events sector and has provided significant financial support including an additional £300 million to the Culture Recovery Fund, details of which were announced on Friday 25th June.

The DCMS Secretary of State made clear at the DCMS Select Committee in May, the government is aware of the wider concerns around securing indemnity for live events and we continue to assess options to provide further support to the sector within the public health context. He also underlined that the government's first priority is to remove remaining barriers (such as social distancing) by reaching Step 4 of the Roadmap. Once that point is reached, if events still cannot go ahead because of a failure of the commercial insurance market, the Government will look at intervening as was done for the TV/Film sectors.

■ Internet: Safety

Chi Onwurah: [\[20397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that future online safety regulation has clear principles and values.

Caroline Dinenge:

The government's approach to online safety regulation has been guided by a clear set of principles and values. Details on how these have been embedded into upcoming online safety legislation are set out in the annex to the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper/outcome/online-harms-white-paper-full-government-response#annex-a>

■ Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges

Ruth Jones: [\[22022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the impact of the re-introduction of roaming charges when travelling to the EU on Newport West constituents.

Matt Warman:

As the UK is no longer a member of the EU, and therefore no longer part of the Roam Like At Home arrangement, UK mobile operators are able to reintroduce roaming surcharges for travel to the EU.

The Government will consider any announcements made by mobile operators where changes are being made to their current EU roaming charges and will consider all available steps to ensure British consumers are treated fairly when travelling. We advise that consumers check with their operators before travelling.

■ Music: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[20595\]](#)

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 the live music industry.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[20596\]](#)

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 the theatre industry.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Prime Minister has always said that we would be led by data, not dates. The government has looked at the data very closely and assessed it against the four tests set out in the Roadmap. It is on the basis of worsening data that the decision has been taken that Step 4 will take place no earlier than 19 July.

We recognise the challenging times facing these sectors and are committed to supporting our world-leading cultural and creative industries. The Department has been working closely with stakeholders across the theatre and live events industry throughout the pandemic to monitor the impact of Covid-19 and delays to Step 4 of the Roadmap and will continue to do so.

Many of these organisations continue to benefit from the significant cross-economy package of support that has been made available throughout this pandemic, including the generous employment schemes, grants, loans, a reduction in VAT to 5%, business rates relief, and the extension of the moratorium on commercial evictions for business tenants until March 2022. In addition, businesses across these sectors may be eligible for further support through the third round of the unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund - details of which were announced on 25 June. This third and final round of funding will provide support to new organisations and existing recipients, as the cultural, heritage and creative sectors move towards reopening at full capacity, underlining the government's commitment to help them build back better as life returns to normal.

■ Music: Exports

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[21801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2021 to Question 180913 on Music: Exports, which member states has his Department produced updated guidance on to help artists understand what is required for working and touring in different EU countries.

Caroline Dinenge:

We have moved at pace and with urgency to provide much greater clarity about the current position.

We understand the concerns about the new arrangements and we are committed to supporting the sectors as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes.

We have published guidance on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), including updated travel advice for travelling to the EU, and we continue to enhance business traveller guidance, setting out the visa and work permit requirements for each Member State. We have also published sector specific 'landing pages' on gov.uk for the creative and cultural sectors to help them navigate the guidance available. We are also engaging regularly with our embassies to support UK nationals abroad, including encouraging Member States to ensure their guidance is accessible and clear as possible.

■ Musicians: EU Countries

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[21800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2021 to Question 186125 on Musicians: EU Countries, whether (a) his Department has concluded its work on an engagement strategy with EU member states and (b) he plans to publish that strategy.

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[21802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 April 2021 to Question 186125 on Musicians: EU Countries and with reference to his evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 13 May 2021, which EU member states have Ministers from his Department had meetings with on touring rights for UK and EU musicians.

Caroline Dinenge:

I have met with Heads of Mission to enlist their support, and Embassies have now had discussions with every Member State.

We have established some touring activities are possible without needing visas or work permits in at least 17 out of 27 Member States. This includes France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and many more. And we are now working closely with individual Member States to encourage them to adopt a more flexible approach, in line with the UK's own rules which allow creative professionals to tour easily here. As part of this, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and I, are

speaking to our ministerial counterparts in a number of key Member States about the importance of touring.

We have already raised the importance of touring during bilateral meetings with ministerial counterparts in Portugal, Austria and the Netherlands as well as the Belgian and Slovenian ambassadors to the UK. We are also arranging conversations with counterparts in other key member states such as Spain, Italy, France and Germany.

As conversations are ongoing, it would not be appropriate to share details of these discussions at this time.

■ **S4C: Finance**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[21874\]](#)

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 ensuring adequate levels of funding for Welsh language free-to-air television channel S4C.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK government is committed to the future of Welsh language broadcasting and of S4C.

As set out in the government response to the Independent Review of S4C, completed in 2018, S4C will be fully funded from the licence fee from 2022 onwards. As part of the Licence Fee Settlement there will be a full and proper consideration of S4C's needs separate to those of the BBC.

The Government is committed to greater transparency in this settlement and the Secretary of State will lay his final determination before Parliament to allow time for debate before the settlement takes effect. Negotiations for the 2022 Licence Fee Settlement are ongoing, and the Government will not be commenting further on the process or the Government's position on the licence fee negotiations at this time.

■ **Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[16003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason stadia with seating are allowed greater spectator capacities under covid-19 restrictions than those without; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government recognises the importance of spectators to competitive sport and remains committed to working towards their full return to stadiums as soon as it is safe to do so.

Step 3 of the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' has permitted fans to return to both indoor and outdoor elite sporting events, albeit under capacity caps. from 17 May.

Only the largest seated stadia (16,000+) are able to benefit from the provision for higher capacities - where crowds can be safely dispersed around a large stadium area, and social distancing maintained at all times. The maximum attendance for these events is 10,000 people or 25% of seated capacity, whichever is lower.

It is important to note that the requirement that social distancing is maintained applies to all venues in Step 3, and events organisers are encouraged in guidance to ensure that crowds remain seated throughout performances and events.

■ **Telecommunications: Disadvantaged**

Chi Onwurah: [\[21904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the data from Ofcom's latest access and inclusion report by constituency.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Ofcom is responsible for publishing its own data. This includes the data from its access and inclusion report. The data from Ofcom's latest report (2018) can be viewed according to individual UK nations, but due to the nature of how the research was conducted, it does not have the granularity to be viewed according to UK parliamentary constituencies.

Ofcom are in the process of deciding how to best present and refocus research across this area after which point it will be able to confirm how this impacts on the publication of upcoming data.

■ **Telecommunications: Infrastructure**

Chi Onwurah: [\[20405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions officials from his Department have had with representatives of (a) the Code Operators and (b) the Speed up Britain Campaign on the Electronic Communications Code.

Matt Warman:

My Department's Barrier Busting Task Force is conducting a series of workshops involving key stakeholders from across the telecoms industry to discuss the need for better working relationships in relation to the Electronic Communications Code.

Ministers and officials engage regularly with the telecoms industry and other key stakeholders on a range of issues. However, it would not be appropriate to have conversations with stakeholders about reforms to the Electronic Communications Code while the responses to the consultation on that issue are being considered.

■ **Telecommunications: Rural Areas**

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[21368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity in rural areas.

Matt Warman:

The government is committed to delivering lightning-fast, reliable broadband to everyone in the UK. 'Project Gigabit' is ambitious, challenging and central to how we build back better. Our plan - to stimulate investment, bust barriers and drive competition - is working. We are on track for one of the fastest rollouts in Europe and for 60% of all households to have access to gigabit speeds by the end of the year. It is a huge leap forward from 2019, when it was 9%.

We are backing Project Gigabit with £5 billion so hard to reach communities are not left out - starting to level up now, not waiting for the end of the commercial rollout, and building on the half a half a million rural homes and businesses already connected through our support.

As part of Project Gigabit we are funding up to £210 million worth of vouchers over the next three years to help with the costs of installing gigabit to people's doorsteps and up to £110 million to connect up to 7,000 rural public buildings such as GP surgeries, libraries and schools. All premises not covered through these measures or expected to be addressed by commercial coverage will be in scope for new Project Gigabit contracts.

Premises which can't access a decent broadband connection remain eligible for the broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO). The broadband USO was launched in March 2020 and gives every eligible premises the legal right to request a decent, affordable broadband connection, providing download speeds of at least 10 Mbps and upload speeds of 1Mbps.

Furthermore, on 9 March last year, the government agreed a £1 billion deal with the Mobile Network Operators to deliver the Shared Rural Network. This will see the operators collectively increase 4G mobile phone coverage throughout the UK to 95% by the end of the programme, underpinned by legally binding coverage commitments. The programme will level up the country by improving mobile coverage for an extra 280,000 premises and 16,000km of roads with areas around the UK starting to see improvements to 4G coverage long before the programme completes.

On 29 June we announced the next step of the Shared Rural Network so people who live and work in rural areas will be able to see how 4G coverage will increase through this world leading programme.

■ Tourism: Coronavirus**Jim Shannon:**[\[18520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to promote tourism in the UK after the lifting of covid-19 travel restrictions.

Dr Kieran Mullan:[\[21367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the recovery of the tourism industry.

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 British Tourist Authority (BTA) will deliver a £10 million consumer promotion with the National Lottery to support the domestic tourist industry. In addition, the Government and VisitBritain will develop a new domestic rail tourism product, similar to the Britrail Pass for international visitors, working with the Rail Delivery Group.

The Government has allocated at least £19 million to domestic and international marketing activity, with a £5.5 million domestic campaign already underway. The Government will work with VisitBritain to welcome back international visitors as soon as it is safe to do so.

EDUCATION**■ Children and Young People: Coronavirus****Jim Shannon:**[\[19583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will provide additional support to children and young people whose mental health may have deteriorated during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

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

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

shared across state-funded schools over the 2020/21 academic year, which is also supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. The Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 support guide to support schools, which includes further information about interventions to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

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

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

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

With regards to higher education (HE), student mental health and suicide prevention are key priorities for this government. We continue to work closely with the HE sector to promote good practice. Universities are not only experts in their student population, but also best placed to identify the needs of their student body. The Department for Health and Social Care has overall policy responsibility for young people's mental health. We continue to work closely with them to take steps to develop mental health and wellbeing support.

We have also increased funding to specialist services. In March, we announced a £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support, which will

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

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

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

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

■ Department for Education: Freedom of Information

Kate Green:

[21903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many freedom of information requests his Department has referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has referred requests to the Cabinet Office Clearing House where appropriate and in line with the published criteria which is available on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-and-freedom-of-information>.

The Department does not maintain records of the number of referrals to the Clearing House.

■ Department for Education: Training

Philip Davies: [\[19542\]](#)

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

Nick Gibb:

In October 2020, the Department began phasing out the unconscious bias training by removing the product from the mandatory training schedule.

Following the [Ministerial Statement](#) on 15 December 2020, in January 2021 the Department fully removed unconscious bias training.

■ English Language: GCSE

Emma Hardy: [\[22010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of arrangements for assessing spoken language as part of GCSE English Language; and whether he has had discussions with representatives of Ofqual on that matter.

Nick Gibb:

There are no current plans to review the subject content for GCSE English Language on which the assessment objectives are based. The Department is supportive of the promotion of oracy, but it has not yet discussed with Ofqual the recommendations made by the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group.

For 2021 and 2022 assessment only, Ofqual have removed the requirement for teachers to submit an audio-visual recording of a sample of students undertaking their spoken language assessment for GCSE English Language. This offers teachers greater flexibility over how and when the assessments are carried out, allowing them to take account of current and potential public health restrictions.

■ Higher Education

Zarah Sultana: [\[22031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department plans to provide to higher education institutions on the respective provision of online and face-to-face teaching for the 2021-22 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

The roadmap is delayed not derailed. By the autumn term, we have every expectation that we will have already been able to move forward with Step 4,

meaning that there will be no further restrictions on the provision of in person teaching and learning.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many providers have developed their digital offering, and as autonomous institutions some might choose to retain elements of this approach. However, they will not have to do this because of COVID-19 restrictions, and our expectation is very clear: universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and ensure it is accessible.

We expect providers to have contingency plans to deal with any identified positive cases of COVID-19 or outbreaks. Higher education (HE) providers should communicate clearly to their students what they can expect from planned teaching and learning under different circumstances and scenarios, so that they are able to make informed choices.

The Office for Students, as regulator for English HE providers, has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and academic standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected.

We intend to update HE guidance in due course to support the return of students for the new academic year.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[21985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of (a) Step 3 guidance issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on covid-19 restrictions and indoor singing and (b) communications from his Department encouraging school children to sing the One Britain One Nation song on 25 June 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has not asked pupils to sing songs for One Britain One Nation day or endorsed any specific materials. However, our schools should promote fundamental British values including those relating to tolerance and respect. As such, the Department supports One Britain One Nation's broad aims to help children learn about equality, kindness and pride, and it is for schools to decide how they teach these important values.

Singing is an important part of pupils' education, especially as this builds confidence and supports wellbeing. The Department has continued to make it clear in all of our COVID-19 related guidance that schools are to continue to teach music and we have provided detailed advice on how schools can do this safely in class.

There may be an additional risk of infection where singing takes place, and the guidance provides detailed advice on how music can be taught safely. This is

available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance>.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Peter Kyle: **[21978]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 18546 on the National Tutoring Programme, of the 173,000 children who have commenced tutoring, how many were located in (a) the South East, (b) the South West, (c) London, (d) East of England, (e) East Midlands, (f) West Midlands, (g) Yorkshire and Humber, (h) the North West and (i) the North East.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) provides additional, targeted support to disadvantaged pupils by providing schools with access to high quality, subsidised tuition from a selection of approved Tuition Partners.

Since its launch in November 2020, over 234,000 pupils have been enrolled to receive tutoring and over 26,000 tutors are available to support schools. Of those enrolled, over 186,000 pupils have already commenced tutoring. We are on track to meet our ambition to support 250,000 pupils this academic year. The programme ensures that additional support has been allocated to regions with the largest numbers of disadvantaged pupils and in regions where access to tutoring has historically been lower. The Department does not have information on the regional split of the 186,000 pupils who have received tutoring.

The NTP is led by demand by schools, and we have undertaken a range of activities with schools, to ensure maximum awareness within the sector and encourage schools to sign up to the programme. We are engaging directly with school leaders, local networks of schools and national stakeholders to ensure that NTP support reaches as many disadvantaged pupils as possible. We will continue focusing on those areas with the most disadvantaged pupils, and where we would like to see more schools take up the opportunity.

Building on the successful first year of the programme, we aim to reach 750,000 disadvantaged pupils during the academic year 2021/22.

■ Overseas Students: Quarantine

Daisy Cooper: **[19704]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that there is sufficient hotel quarantine accommodation for students arriving from countries on the covid-19 travel red list.

Michelle Donelan:

International students are a vital and valued part of our higher education sector. I speak regularly with my counterparts across the government about how various COVID-19 policies may affect students, with a view to minimising burdens for students while maintaining public health. I remain in close contact with Department

for Health and Social Care Ministers responsible for the Managed Quarantine Service.

Quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel is a necessary measure taken in order to stop the spread of potentially harmful variants of COVID-19 into the UK. International students on the 'red list' are still able to enter the UK if they have been in or transited through a 'red list' country in the last 10 days, but they are required to quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel on arrival for ten days as set out in the guidance.

The government recently published an update to the International Education Strategy, stressing the UK's commitment to international students. The strategy contains a number of specific commitments to improve the international student journey, prioritising international student experience.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Catherine West:

[20473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has received specific covid-19 scientific advice on the decision to restrict (a) indoor school proms and (b) school open days.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has not received specific scientific advice on events such as proms and open days. Schools should continue to assess risk and implement the system of controls set out in our guidance, including when considering any events. More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#system-of-controls>, and in the Government's roadmap out of lockdown: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England (PHE) to develop guidance. Implementing the system of controls creates a safer environment for pupils and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. Working with PHE, the Department continually reviews the measures, which are informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice, and updates the guidance for schools accordingly.

Helen Hayes:

[21981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to (a) improve ventilation in schools and (b) implement other mitigation measures to reduce aerosol transmission of covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's guidance states that it is important that schools, when open, ensure that they are well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained. This can be achieved by a variety of measures including using mechanical ventilation systems and/or natural ventilation, such as opening windows.

In all cases, measures should be taken to encourage fresh air into the building, whilst striking a balance with thermal comfort. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

The Department continues to review the ventilation requirements in the system of controls including considering whether monitoring carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels would be appropriate, and we are working with the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and NHS Test and Trace on a pilot project to measure CO₂ levels in typical classrooms.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, all schools have implemented a range of protective measures that make up the Public Health England endorsed 'system of controls' that are recommended in the Department's guidance. These mitigation measures create a safer environment for staff, pupils and children where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is substantially reduced. These measures include social distancing and use of bubbles, use of face coverings for staff in areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain (for example, in communal areas) and enhanced cleaning routines.

The Department continues to keep the system of controls under review based on the latest scientific evidence and advice as this continues to evolve.

■ Schools: Politics

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[22004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's announcement that schools in the United Kingdom will be encouraged to celebrate One Britain One Nation Day on 25 June 2021, what assessment he has made of potential difficulties of implementing that announcement given that (a) Northern Ireland is not located in Great Britain and (b) many schools in Scotland will be closed for the summer holidays on that day.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is supportive of One Britain One Nation's broad aims to help children learn about equality, kindness and pride. The Government believes in the importance of these shared values which are taught and reinforced every day in schools across the UK.

Participation, and the nature of it, is a matter for schools.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Rachael Maskell: [\[20460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will provide details of the schools that are awaiting (a) full and (b) partial rebuilds; and whether schools are ranked in order of priority for rebuilds.

Rachael Maskell:

[20461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will set out the reasons for which schools that are awaiting full or partial rebuilds have not been included in each round of the School Rebuilding Programme.

Rachael Maskell:

[20462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will establish exceptional criteria for schools waiting for a full or partial rebuild to enable schools that do not fit into his Departmental modelling to apply for funding.

Nick Gibb:

In February 2020 the Department announced the first 50 of 500 projects to replace or refurbish buildings through the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP). The Department is also replacing or refurbishing school buildings through the Priority School Building Programme. All confirmed projects in both programmes are underway or complete. Details of the projects are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-first-50-schools> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/priority-school-building-programme-psbp#psbp-1:-documents-and-overview>.

The Department does not hold a central list of schools ranked in order of priority for rebuilds or awaiting rebuilding, part rebuilding, or refurbishment, beyond the schools confirmed for these programmes. Data is collected on the condition of school buildings through the Condition Data Collection (CDC). Details of this programme are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/condition-data-collection-2-cdc2-programme>.

The prioritisation process for the second round of 50 SRP projects is ongoing, informed by data from CDC as well as further investigations and site visits, to identify schools where condition need is most highly concentrated and urgent. The process used to prioritise these projects is explained here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme/school-rebuilding-programme>.

The Department plans to consult later this year on the approach to prioritising projects for the next 400 projects in SRP, following which the approach for future project will be confirmed. The Department expects there to be opportunities for evidence of severe condition need not captured by CDC data to be submitted for consideration in future rounds.

Buildings may also be replaced outside of these programmes. The Department allocates capital funding annually to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of their buildings. Since 2015, the Department has allocated £11.3 billion in condition funding, including £1.8 billion committed for financial year 2021-22.

■ Schools: Sports

Dame Diana Johnson:

[21844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria was used to publish guidance on holding school sports days during the covid-19 outbreak in summer 2021; and what assessment he has made of whether that guidance is consistent with the guidance published for other larger sporting events.

Nick Gibb:

Schools that are planning sports days this term should complete thorough risk assessments and ensure that they are run in line with their system of controls. These are the actions that have been in place since the autumn term and that all schools must take to reduce risks and create an inherently safer environment. The system of controls are set out in the Department's guidance to schools, available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#system-of-controls>.

The Department for Education has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England (PHE) to develop guidance for schools. We work with PHE to continually review the measures, which are informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice, and update the guidance accordingly.

Pupils must remain grouped in their class or year-group 'bubbles' and sports equipment should be regularly cleaned throughout the event. Any spectators must adhere to current social distancing requirements. Where events take place outdoors, spectators can gather in separate groups of up to 30, which is the current legal gathering limit. Dependent on the size of the area available, multiple groups of 30 may attend as long as there is no mixing between groups at any stage.

Elite sporting competitions follow a protocol produced by a working group of leaders, Chief Medical Officers and partner organisations. This protocol is available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/elite-sport-return-to-domestic-competition-guidance>. A set of minimum standards must be in place for these events to go ahead and, while the Government works to ensure guidance is coherent between sectors, differences in approach are sometimes needed due to the different circumstances involved.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[21964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he is providing to universities for students who (a) are diagnosed with covid-19 or (b) have to self-isolate.

Michelle Donelan:

While universities are autonomous institutions, the safety and wellbeing of staff and students is always our priority.

We have published the 'Higher education coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance' which offers advice on supporting students who are self-isolating and can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#students-returning-to-campus>. It is vitally important that universities continue to make sure that students feel as supported as possible if they need to self-isolate due to COVID-19. This robust package of support needs to include mental health and wellbeing support, daily communications and ensuring students have access to suitable free or affordable food.

Universities UK have also produced a checklist for providers to support students who are required to self-isolate as well as bespoke guidance for higher education (HE) providers on how to prepare for and care for students who are required to self-isolate on arrival in the UK. We encourage providers to review this guidance when considering how best to support their international and other students arriving from overseas. The checklist can be accessed here: <https://universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2020/uuk-checklist-support-self-isolating-students.pdf>.

The Office for Students (OfS) has published a statement on support for students in self-isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak, which can be accessed here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/ofs-student-panel-statement-on-support-for-students-in-self-isolation-during-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic/>.

We have made an additional £85 million of funding available for student hardship in the 2020/21 academic year. This is on top of the £256 million of government funded student premium funding already available to HE providers to draw on. HE providers have are able to use this flexibly to support those students who need it most. It can be used in a variety of ways including the purchase mental health support and help for students due to financial hardship caused by illness and the need to self-isolate.

Alongside this, we have worked with the OfS to launch the online mental health platform Student Space, worth up to £3 million, in addition to the £15 million we have asked them to allocate to student mental health initiatives next year.

Some students may be eligible for a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, if they are required to self-isolate. Further guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Competition****Catherine West:**[\[20475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to support the competitiveness of British farming in the context of the proposed future UK-Australia trade deal.

Victoria Prentis:

The historic UK-Australia trade deal agreed by the Prime Minister offers benefits for businesses, producers and consumers across the UK.

It cuts all tariffs on UK exports to Australia, whilst protecting UK agricultural sensitivities and upholding our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. We've negotiated strong safeguards and quotas in the deal to protect UK farmers, while supporting them to grow exports of top-quality British produce overseas.

The deal is a gateway to joining CPTPP, a high standard free trade agreement of 11 Pacific nations. This will create new export opportunities for British farmers to export to these high growth markets. The Government is committed to supporting the sector to capture the full benefits of the market access secured through our international trade agreements. We are working in lockstep with partners like the NFU, the AHDB and the Food and Drink Federation to deliver tailored support on the ground for these farmers and food producers through our Open Doors programme. The Minister for Trade Policy has discussed the agreement with his counterparts in the Devolved Administrations and will continue to do so, including through the Ministerial Forum for Trade. We are also looking at what further export support we can put in place.

The Government is also facilitating agricultural productivity improvements through our domestic reform programme in England. We are putting forward an ambitious package of measures that will focus on enabling investment, supporting innovation, facilitating structural changes, and increasing capability and skills. This includes a package of reforms to agricultural tenancy policy and the legislative framework which will give tenants more flexibility to adapt their business to change as we bring in a new domestic agriculture policy. We are also improving transparency in the supply chain to help food producers strengthen their position at the farm gate and seek a fairer return from the marketplace.

■ Animal Welfare: Select Committees**Mr David Jones:**[\[21840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of appointing a (a) zoo and (b) aquarium expert to the new Animal Sentience Committee.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill creates an expert committee, the Animal Sentience Committee, which has powers to consider how Ministerial policy decisions have paid all due regard to the welfare of animals as sentient beings. The Bill introduces new powers for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to appoint appropriate committee members. Recruitment activity for the Committee will be in line with standard public appointments rules and will take place as soon as is practicable. This includes the principle that candidates should be drawn from a strong, diverse field, and that their skills, experiences and qualities should meet the needs of the Committee.

■ Badgers and Cattle: Disease Control

Olivia Blake: [\[20574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to scale up cattle and badger vaccinations to help eradicate bovine TB.

Olivia Blake: [\[20575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has in phasing out badger culling through the use of (a) field trials of cattle vaccinations, (b) increasing the number of badgers vaccinated against bovine TB and (c) improved testing to intercept bovine TB earlier; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

We have awarded funding for a five-year badger vaccination programme in East Sussex. The scheme, which will see vaccination deployed by the farming community, will help refine future delivery models for deploying large scale farmer-led vaccination schemes.

This year we also intend to undertake government-funded badger vaccination in an area where four-year intensive badger culling has ended, with ongoing surveillance of the disease in badgers in the area. We will continue to bolster our capability to deploy even more badger vaccination in post-cull areas from 2022.

By 2025 it is our aim to have significantly expanded badger vaccination across land where four-year intensive badger culling has ended. Through this we will gain a better understanding of the practicalities of deployment in a reduced badger population, as well as the effect of badger vaccination on reducing disease spread to cattle.

The Government has developed a 'Train the Trainer' course to enable experienced cage-trappers and lay vaccinators to qualify as trainers. This scheme is designed to increase the number of certified trainers who can then train new lay-vaccinators and trappers in localised training hubs. This alleviates pressure on the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), who to date have been the sole training provider, enabling more lay people to qualify as badger vaccinators than ever before.

Our world-leading cattle vaccination trials are set to begin this summer in England and Wales, marking the latest milestone in our aim to achieve officially TB free (OTF)

status for England by 2038. This has been made possible by a significant scientific breakthrough by APHA in developing a new skin test that can detect infected among vaccinated cattle (a DIVA test) and is a major step forwards in our battle against bovine TB. As wider preventive measures like cattle vaccines are introduced, we will also accelerate other elements of our strategy and start to phase out badger culling in England, as no one wants to continue the cull of a protected species indefinitely.

From 12 July the policy for mandatory interferon gamma (IFN- γ) blood testing of cattle in the High Risk Area and parts of the Edge Area of England will be changing, to focus our efforts on those herds that suffer a new TB breakdown within 18 months of the end of a previous incident. By the end of this year, APHA will also be opening a new IFN- γ testing laboratory in Thirsk to better cope with the projected increasing demand for this supplementary cattle TB test.

Also from July, most cattle herds in the counties of the High Risk Area of the West of England will undergo routine surveillance for TB using the tuberculin skin test every six months instead of annually.

Further information about these two forthcoming cattle TB testing policy changes can be found on the TB Hub:

<https://tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/refinements-to-the-interferon-gamma-testing-policy-in-the-high-risk-and-edge-area-of-england/>

<https://tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/six-monthly-surveillance-testing-of-cattle-herds-in-the-high-risk-area/>

■ **Badgers: Disease Control**

Olivia Blake:

[20573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the scientific data for continuing the badger cull.

Rebecca Pow:

Our bTB eradication strategy is founded in science. The cornerstone of our strategy is a policy of regular testing and removal of infected cattle from herds. We have incrementally introduced tougher restrictions on cattle movements from herds at risk of infection and more sensitive tests. We have introduced measures to encourage greater risk management and more information for cattle keepers, deployed wildlife controls in areas where the disease is rife and new biosecurity measures to try to break the cycle of infection between cattle and badgers.

Intensive badger culls were only ever envisaged as a phase of the strategy. Following Professor Sir Charles Godfray's review, we have set out our intended next steps. The next phase of the strategy focuses on developing a deployable cattle vaccine, wider rollout of badger vaccination and improvements to TB testing. The Government will retain the ability to introduce new cull zones where local epidemiological evidence points to an ongoing role of badgers in the disease.

The main scientific evidence basis for the badger cull is the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) carried out from 1997 to 2005. Using data from the start of the RBCT, it has been estimated through mathematical modelling that infected badgers contributed to some 50% of cattle herd TB breakdowns in high incidence areas, either directly or indirectly.

More recent analysis published by the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) estimates that between 5,000 and 14,000 farms are exposed to infected wildlife and 36% of new TB breakdowns are directly due to wildlife. This study can be found here <https://bmcvetres.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s12917-018-1595-9.pdf>

In October 2019 a study by the APHA demonstrated that the cull has resulted in significant reductions in the spread of the disease to cattle, showing reductions of 66% and 37% in the two areas who had culled for four years, compared to matched comparison areas where culling did not take place. The study can be found at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-49957-6>.

The APHA published raw data in October 2020 which shows encouraging trends of reduced incidence and prevalence across the first 32 cull areas compared with the years before culling began. Compared with the average of the four years before culling started, OTFW incidence has dropped by an average of 27% after 2 years, 51% after 4 years and 53% after 6 years in the first twenty-one, three and two areas respectively. The data can be found on gov.uk here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-incidence-of-tb-in-cattle-in-licenced-badger-control-areas-in-2013-to-2019>

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Freedom of Information

Cat Smith:

[21937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many requests for advice on handling freedom of information requests the central Cabinet Office Clearing House has received in each year since 2016.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has referred requests to the Cabinet Office Clearing House where appropriate and in line with the published criteria which are available on gov.uk here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-and-freedom-of-information>.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Training

Philip Davies:

[19548]

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

Victoria Prentis:

Defra draws its training provision from Civil Service Learning (CSL), which included access to unconscious bias training products for all staff including Senior Civil Servants. It is mandatory for civil servants to use CSL for their learning.

In January 2021, CSL took the decision to withdraw the product in line with the Ministerial Statement that outlined why this training should cease. The learning pages on our internal intranet were updated and staff are now directed to the CSL product called Inclusion in the Civil Service, therefore ensuring that unconscious bias training has been phased out in Defra. Natural England took the same action.

The Environment Agency removed unconscious bias training from its list of mandatory learning in January 2021. A short e-learning product remains accessible as a topic of interest.

■ Food Supply**Stuart Anderson:**[\[19692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen local sustainable food supply chains.

Victoria Prentis:

As a Government, we have a manifesto commitment to get people both at home and abroad lining up to buy British. We will always champion our farmers and producers, supporting them to grow more of our great British food, and to provide a reliable and sustainable food supply to the British public.

By showcasing the UK's excellent food and drink, we will encourage consumers to explore more of our regional products, including our iconic geographical indications (GIs), such as Vale of Evesham Asparagus.

We will be consulting on a refreshed version of the Government Buying Standards for Food this summer. We will be seeking views on how the standards can promote even greater uptake of local, sustainably produced food by public procurers and their suppliers. We are also working closely with the Crown Commercial Service to develop a trial in the South West region which will create new and exciting routes into public sector food procurement for high quality, sustainable and locally sourced food and drink.

Sustainability and achieving the net zero target are priorities for Government. We are therefore developing a range of measures which will enable farmers to optimise sustainable food production, reduce emissions from agriculture, and allow consumer choices to drive those changes. These measures include the Agriculture Act, our future farming policy, our forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper and the 25 Year Environment Plan.

■ Food: UK Trade with EU

Jonathan Edwards: [\[21871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with EU representatives on the UK-EU veterinary agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary rules on movements of animals and food products.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[21872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a UK-EU veterinary agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary rules on movements of animals and food products on Welsh (a) exports and (b) imports.

Victoria Prentis:

We continue to engage with the EU on steps we can take to reduce trade frictions. At the first meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) Partnership Council on 9 June, the UK emphasised the importance of cooperating to avoid unnecessary SPS barriers, and reiterated that we are open to an SPS agreement based on equivalence.

The UK proposed a mechanism to agree equivalence during the TCA negotiations, which the EU did not countenance. We are open to discussions with the EU on additional steps to further reduce trade friction, but these cannot be on the basis of future alignment with EU rules. This would compromise UK sovereignty over our own laws.

Our TCA also provides an alternative framework for agreeing trade facilitations going forward. Over time, this will help to reduce the burden on businesses from border controls and certification requirements. We will seek to reduce checks safely through the regular dialogue both sides have committed to in the agreement.

■ Ivory

Luke Pollard: [\[19675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 10641 on Ivory, how much funding has been allocated to the awareness raising campaign for the ownership, sale and donation of ivory items.

Rebecca Pow:

The awareness raising campaign for the commencement of the Ivory Act will include information about the implementation of the ban, the exemptions, and how individuals and businesses can ensure they comply with the law. A budgetary provision of up to £30,000 has been made.

Defra will also be providing guidance on a number of matters to assist with compliance with the Act. Views on several specific matters to be included in that guidance were sought in the consultation on implementing the Ivory Act that closed on 4 May.

■ Nappies: Recycling**Alex Davies-Jones:**[\[22043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to implement the recommendations of the UN Environment Programme's Life Cycle Initiative's report on single-use nappies and their alternatives.

Rebecca Pow:

We are aware of the UN Environment Programme's report which references a number of life cycle analyses on nappies from around the world, including the work carried out by the Environment Agency in the UK in 2005 and 2008.

As you know we are funding our own environmental assessment of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products, with the primary focus on nappies, to bring the research for the UK up to date. The work will be published later this year, following peer review, and the sources of the information used will be included in the final report. Any future action on nappies by Government and industry will take into account this and any other relevant information.

■ Pigmeat**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[21828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK-Australia trade deal on the demand for pork products dependent on the use of sow stalls.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK-Australia trade deal is the first we have negotiated from scratch since leaving the EU. Our goal is a long-term sustainable future for British farming, based on high standards, competitiveness and productivity, which meets the growing demand for our world-class produce.

The Australian Pork Industry has announced it would "commit to pursuing the voluntary phasing out of the use of sow stalls". The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement will contain a commitment to an Animal Welfare Working Group to provide a forum for ongoing cooperation and initiatives in areas of mutual interest, to review animal welfare developments and to promote high animal welfare practices.

The UK tariff treatment for pork products from Australia is not yet determined.

■ Plastics: Waste Disposal**Bill Esterson:**[\[21848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on the treatment of plastic waste of the Greenpeace Plastic Pledge; and whether he has plans to implement the recommendations set out in that pledge.

Fleur Anderson:[\[22033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing (a) a target to reduce the use of single plastic by 50 per cent by 2025 and (b) other legally binding targets to substantially reduce waste at source.

Alex Davies-Jones:[\[22044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of banning the importing of plastic waste to the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. We are making great strides to tackle plastic pollution. In December 2018 we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy. Our approach is focused on increasing supply and demand for secondary materials to be recycled in the UK. We know more needs to be done, and for the most problematic plastics we are going faster - which is why we have committed to work towards all plastic packaging on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.

The UK Government has a manifesto commitment to ban exports of plastic waste to non-OECD countries. The Government has committed to consult on this measure and work to deliver this is underway. Defra has commissioned research to have a better understanding of plastic waste recycling capacity in the UK and OECD member countries, and this research will be key to the development of policy options to implement the manifesto commitment. We currently plan to consult before the end of 2022 on options to deliver the proposed ban.

Legitimate imports of plastic waste into the UK will be destined for recovery operations. The UK Government does not permit the import of plastic waste for disposal. The UK Government has not assessed the benefits of a ban on plastic waste imports and has no plans to do so.

The Environment Bill includes a requirement for the Government to set at least one long-term target on resource efficiency and waste reduction. This target will take a holistic approach to reduce consumption of all materials, including plastics, increasing resource productivity and reducing the volume of waste we generate. Work is already underway to develop these targets. In order to help guide the Government, the Resources and Waste Targets Expert Group has been formed. More information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/resources-and-waste-targets-expert-group>. Moreover, the Government is exploring packaging recycling targets under our proposals for extended producer responsibility for packaging. The consultation on our more detailed proposals closed on the 4 June.

■ Poultry: Factory Farming

Daisy Cooper:

[\[19702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his policy is on the increase and expansion of intensive broiler factories.

Victoria Prentis:

A vibrant poultry sector is a crucial part of our ongoing work to make sure the UK continues to have access to the food we all need. Farms of all sizes have a role to play in promoting a sustainable agricultural sector. All operational livestock farms, no matter the size or system of production, must comply with our comprehensive laws on animal health and welfare, planning, veterinary medicines and environmental legislation.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Africa and Asia: Overseas Aid

Gareth Thomas:

[\[19482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the monetary value is of the development assistance that the UK has provided to (a) Bangladesh, (b) Ghana, (c) India, (d) Kenya, (e) Nepal, (f) Nigeria, (g) Pakistan, (h) South Africa, (i) Somalia and (j) Sri Lanka in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

A country breakdown of UK spending on Official Development Assistance (ODA) for 2015-2019 is detailed in the annual Statistics on International Development, available online. For countries in Africa, please use table A4a and for countries in Asia, please use table A4b. These countries will also receive ODA from multilaterals, to which the UK contributes. The UK imputed share of multilateral aid to these countries is published in Table A10.

Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2020 will be published in the autumn 2021, and will contain a detailed breakdowns of the UK's ODA spend for 2020.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[19483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the monetary value is of the development assistance that the UK plans to provide to (a) Bangladesh, (b) Ghana, (c) India, (d) Kenya, (e) Nepal, (f) Nigeria, (g) Pakistan, (h) South Africa, (i) Somalia and (j) Sri Lanka in (i) the financial year 2021-22 and (ii) 2022-23; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

Full budgets per country and a final audited spend for 2020/21 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

■ British Council: Closures**Mr John Baron:**[\[21831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the announcement of closures to the British Council's international network, The British Council's future: a message from Kate Ewart-Biggs, Interim CEO on 24 June 2021, whether he plans for there be further closures.

Nigel Adams:

The Integrated Review reiterated our commitment to the British Council and its valuable contribution to projecting UK soft power. We have underscored this commitment with the additional financial support we have allocated to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the Council - over £600 million since March 2020. This includes a 2021/22 grant in aid allocation of £189 million - a 27% increase on funding for 2020/21.

The British Council is further adapting to the digital age, with digital services already having expanded rapidly during the pandemic. The British Council will continue to operate in over 100 countries promoting the English language, UK arts and culture and education. We are not planning further closures. Decisions on future funding will be made as part of the upcoming Spending Review.

■ Caribbean: Overseas Aid**Sarah Champion:**[\[19597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance the Government has spent in the Caribbean in the last five years; and how much of that spending was disbursed for the purpose of advancing global LGBT+ rights.

Nigel Adams:

Between 2015 and 2019, the UK Government has spent over £456 million of Official Development Assistance in the priority ODA-eligible Caribbean countries (Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) and over £1.1 billion in the wider Americas region. The UK plays an active role globally in support of LGBT+ rights. We have consistently committed funding to LGBT+ rights programme work across the region.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Freedom of Information**Florence Eshalomi:** [\[22063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many freedom of information requests his Department has referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) do not hold this information centrally, and it can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The FCDO (and its former legacy departments) has referred requests to the Cabinet Office Clearing House where appropriate and in line with the published criteria. This is available on the gov.uk website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-and-freedom-of-information>.

■ Husain Barakat**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[21842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the meeting between HM Ambassador to Bahrain and the Bahraini Minister of Interior on 9 June 2021, whether HM Ambassador was aware that Husain Bakarat had died of covid-19 prior to that meeting; and whether that meeting was held to discuss Husain Bakarat.

James Cleverly:

We regularly discuss the challenges of managing Covid-19 in prisons with senior members of the Bahraini Government and continue to raise specific cases with senior interlocutors, as well as with the independent human rights oversight bodies.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power**Lisa Nandy:** [\[21899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the restoration of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly:

We have been engaged in intensive discussions in Vienna with other Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) participants and the US, which are aimed at returning the US to the JCPoA, bringing Iran back into full compliance with its commitments and restoring the benefits of the deal for all. Our priority remains to find a diplomatic way forward and bring an end to Iran's continues systematic non-compliance with its JCPoA commitments.

■ Iraq: Turkey**Ben Lake:**[\[19657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of allegations that Turkey used chemical weapons in Iraqi Kurdistan.

James Cleverly:

We have not made an assessment of the allegations.

Ben Lake:[\[19658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions has he had with his Turkish counterparts on Turkish military intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Ben Lake:[\[19659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many discussions he has had with his Iraqi counterparts on Turkish military interventions in Iraqi Kurdistan.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to follow the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan closely. The Foreign Secretary met with Iraqi President Saleh, Prime Minister Kadhimi and Foreign Minister Hussein during his visit to Iraq on 8-9 June, and welcomed recent discussions between Iraqi and Turkish Defence Ministers regarding Ankara's military operations against the PKK in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. He also reiterated the importance of dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians. The UK continues to engage with Turkey on a broad range of regional issues.

■ Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser**Caroline Lucas:**[\[20363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Israeli counterpart (a) on the death of 16-year-old Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser in the West Bank on 18 May 2021, (b) on reports that Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser was struck in the head with Israeli-fired live ammunition and (a) to seek assurances that there will be a criminal investigation into his death.

Caroline Lucas:[\[20364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Israeli counterpart (a) on the death of 16-year-old Mohammad Said Mohammad Hamayel in the West Bank on 11 June 2021, (b) on reports that he was shot with live ammunition by Israeli forces and (c) to seek assurances that there will be a criminal investigation into his death.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the reports surrounding the deaths of Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser and Mohammad Said Mohammad Hamayel. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we urge the Government of Israel to conduct swift and transparent investigations. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

■ **Israel: Palestinians**

Lisa Nandy: [\[21896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts at the G7 Summit in Cornwall on re-establishing a peace process to secure a negotiated two-state solution between Israel and Palestine.

Lisa Nandy: [\[21897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts at the G7 Summit in Cornwall on the establishment of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. The Foreign Secretary regularly discusses this issue with international counterparts. Peace will only come through negotiations between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress.

■ **Jagtar Singh Johal**

Lisa Nandy: [\[21895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the arbitrary detention of UK national, Mr Jagtar Singh Johal.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously, and raises concerns with the local authorities where appropriate. We regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India at official and Ministerial level. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 6 May. The Secretary of State for International Trade raised the case with the Indian Minister for Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad, on 5 February. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kishan Reddy and with Minister Prasad on 15 March during his visit to India. Most recently, Lord Ahmad raised Mr Johal's case with

the Indian High Commissioner on 8 June. This Government will continue to look to raise our concerns about Mr Johal's case at all appropriate opportunities.

■ **Libya: Elections**

Lisa Nandy:

[\[21898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the UK is providing to the Government of National Unity to ensure free and fair elections are held in Libya by the end of 2021.

James Cleverly:

Free, fair and inclusive national elections on 24 December 2021, including women's full, equal and meaningful participation, are a priority for the UK, as set out in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum Roadmap and endorsed by UK-drafted UN Security Council Resolution 2570. The Prime Minister discussed the importance of elections in his meeting with Prime Minister Dabaiba in London on 24 June 2021. I shared the same message with a range of Libyan interlocutors during my visit to Tripoli on 9-10 June and at the Berlin II Conference on 23 June. The UK has, through the UN Development Programme, provided support to the High National Executive Council (HNEC) to plan, prepare and conduct national and municipal elections in Libya. The UK also provided financial support to the UN to convene the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum.

■ **Myanmar: Coronavirus**

Ruth Jones:

[\[19685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the covid-19 situation in Myanmar.

Nigel Adams:

Myanmar has reported its highest daily increase in Covid cases since the February coup and international concern is growing because of the country's collapsed health system and the junta's continued crackdown on medics. We are concerned about the impact of Covid on Myanmar's population, and particularly the increased vulnerability to the disease of people who have been internally displaced as a result of the coup. Protecting access to basic healthcare remains a UK priority, and we are ensuring that UK aid continues to support life-saving service delivery.

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

■ Nigeria: Security

Ruth Jones:

[\[19691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the situation in South East Nigeria in the context of reports by the Igbo Elders Council that over 5,000 Igbo youth have been killed and over 10,000 others are detained arbitrarily in camps and reports from civilians of ongoing mistreatment as a result of an ongoing special security operation in that region.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government condemns all incidents of violence in Nigeria. We are concerned by the increasing levels of violence in the South East. We encourage reconciliation and constructive dialogue between the many ethnic groups and communities that make up and contribute to the strength and diversity of Nigeria, and for all to play their part in stopping rising insecurity and violence. We are working in Nigeria to promote intercommunal and interfaith dialogue, and continue to call for solutions that address the underlying causes of violence. During my visit to Nigeria in April, I met the President's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, and the Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama, to discuss insecurity. I raised the importance of protecting all communities across Nigeria.

■ Nigeria: Violence

Ruth Jones:

[\[20612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Nigerian President's response to reported recent attacks on offices of the national electoral commission in the southeast of that country.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by increasing insecurity across Nigeria and the impact this is having on local communities. I visited Nigeria in April and discussed increasing insecurity across the country with the President's Chief of Staff, the Foreign Minister and community leaders.

We condemn the recent attacks on the offices of the Independent National Electoral Commission, which threaten the conduct of credible elections and undermine efforts to strengthen Nigeria's democracy. On 19 May, the British High Commissioner publicly expressed our concern about the attacks and called for security forces to protect all election facilities. In recent weeks, our High Commission staff in Abuja have met Independent National Electoral Commission officials to discuss preparations for elections, the security of election facilities and potential support from the international community. We continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

■ Overseas Aid: HIV Infection**Jeremy Hunt:****[21851]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Government has allocated to securing universal international access to HIV (a) prevention, (b) treatment, (c) care and (d) support since 2005.

Wendy Morton:

Bilateral Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) for HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, and care has been consistently tracked using the OECD-DAC sector code "13040 STD control including HIV/AIDS" which includes prevention, treatment and care and "16064 Social mitigation of HIV/AIDS" which includes support. Details of UK aid spend for 2017 to 2019 disaggregated by sector code can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921034/Data_Underlying_SID_2019.ods. Details of UK aid spend for 2009 to 2016 disaggregated by sector code can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/695435/data-underlying-the-sid2017-revision-March.ods. Details of UK aid Spend pre-2009 disaggregated by sector code can be found on the OECD-DAC CRVS system at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>.

We estimate £1.5 billion of bilateral UK aid has been spent on STD control including HIV and AIDS, and £675,000 has been spent on Social mitigation of HIV and AIDS between 2005 and 2019. This includes support to prevention, treatment and care of HIV and AIDS. The UK continues to be a major funder of the global HIV response alongside our donor partners, including through £340 million support for the WHO and £1.4 billion pledge for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. This includes a commitment made this month to the Robert Carr Fund to reach inadequately served populations in the HIV response.

Jeremy Hunt:**[21852]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government took to tackle HIV and AIDS worldwide in the (a) late 1990s and (b) early 2000s; and how much funding was allocated to that work during that time period.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for International Development (DFID)'s departmental report in 2000 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67962/deptreport2000.pdf) summarised UK efforts to tackle HIV and AIDS worldwide in 1999. This included multilateral support to agencies such as UNAIDS and bilateral sexual and reproductive health programmes in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, China and India. During 1999, DFID also announced £14 million for global AIDS vaccine research.

In 2001, DFID published a new Strategy on HIV/AIDS, and this was refreshed in 2004. In 2003, DFID established a new HIV/AIDS Policy Team and published a Call

for Action on HIV/AIDS as part of intensified efforts to tackle the pandemic. A National Audit Office review of DFID's response to HIV/AIDS in 2004 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2004/06/0304664es.pdf>) identified "DFID's broad-based approach, its flexibility of response in-country, and its role in supporting research as strengths", the review also included an analysis of spend UK aid spend on HIV and AIDS.

■ South Africa: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones: [\[19684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the covid-19 situation in South Africa.

James Duddridge:

South Africa is currently experiencing its third wave of COVID-19, with new cases currently averaging over 10,000 a day. On 15 June President Ramaphosa increased lockdown restrictions, including a longer curfew and some limitations on alcohol retail hours. South Africa has started a vaccination programme, and 2.1 million people have received their first dose.

The UK has provided almost £4 million to South Africa's Solidarity Fund including £1.8 million to support the vaccine rollout. A further £2.2 million of support has helped mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups such as women and children, and migrant workers.

On 6 May the Foreign Secretary met the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, and they agreed a broad and deep range of bilateral cooperation for the next two years on issues including in health, climate, trade, science and foreign policy. The Prime Minister met with the South African President at the G7 in Cornwall, where they discussed the need to expand COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity globally, and the UK's commitment to donate 100 million surplus vaccines in the next year.

■ Sri Lanka: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones: [\[19686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the covid-19 situation in Sri Lanka.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is concerned about the COVID-19 situation in Sri Lanka, and is in regular contact with the Sri Lankan authorities and representatives of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Sri Lanka. Daily case numbers remain high, a number of variants have been detected, and some travel restrictions are in place. Sri Lanka's vaccination programme is underway, including in areas beyond Colombo and the Western Province. The Minister of State for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, discussed the situation with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Dinesh Gunawardena, on 17 June.

The UK Prime Minister announced on 11 June that the UK will donate 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines within the next year, with 30 million of those donated by the end of 2021. 80% of the vaccines donated will go to COVAX, the multilateral mechanism set up to support international co-operation on vaccines. So far, COVAX has helped deliver over 81 million doses to 129 countries and territories, including Sri Lanka.

■ UN World Conference against Racism

Christian Wakeford:

[\[19738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make a statement on events marking the 20th anniversary of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban at the United Nations in September 2021.

Nigel Adams:

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

■ Zimbabwe: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[19683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the covid-19 situation in Zimbabwe.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by the sharp increase in new cases of Covid-19 in Zimbabwe. Whilst the Government has been proactive around lockdowns and encouraging public health measures, the health system is still incredibly vulnerable. It is vital that the Government does not use the Covid-19 lockdown to crackdown on the opposition and undermine the rights enshrined in Zimbabwe's constitution.

Zimbabwe's vaccine rollout is now underway, and currently has the third highest number of people vaccinated with two doses in Africa. To date, 4.7% of the population has received their first dose and 2.9% has been fully vaccinated. Zimbabwe has been confirmed as a participant for the COVAX facility, but when and how Zimbabwe will take up these vaccines is still under discussion.

In early 2020, the UK reprogrammed £21.24 million through existing programmes to provide critical support to primary health care ensuring vital services continue such as immunisations, pre and post-natal care and treatment for malnutrition. This support also provides community messaging, support for frontline workers, water sanitation and hygiene improvement in schools and health facilities, and humanitarian food and cash aid to help mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable.

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

Bob Blackman: [\[20370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the procedures are for healthcare staff to register and report breaches of the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Bob Blackman: [\[20371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that breaches of the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020 relating to sections 1.3 and 3(A) of the Abortion Act 1967 are reported to police in a timely manner by healthcare staff; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Healthcare staff providing care to women accessing abortions should ensure that relevant processes are in place to identify and report breaches of the Abortion Act 1967 and the Required Standard Operating Procedures. Decisions to bring a prosecution in relation to the law on abortion are for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Bob Blackman: [\[20372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish terms of reference for his Department's review of the efficacy of the recording of data using HSA4 forms by clinicians in respect of the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Bob Blackman: [\[20373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that his Department's review of the use of the HSA4 forms for data collection on complications experienced during home abortions in respect of the implementation of the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020 is (a) comprehensive and (b) impartial; and if he will make a statement.

Bob Blackman: [\[20375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to develop a protocol to consistently and throughout the NHS (a) record and (b) analyse incidences of retained products of conception in relation to the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Bob Blackman: [\[20376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to collect data on retained products of conception arising from terminations in respect of the implementation of the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Scoping of the Department's project to review the system of recording abortion complications data is currently underway and we anticipate this work will be completed later this year. The review will cover all data on complications arising from abortion.

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

Bob Blackman: [\[20374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans, in the 2021-22 parliamentary session, to repeal the regulations for home abortions as set out in the temporary provisions under the Coronavirus Act 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Government committed to undertake a public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure. The consultation has now closed and we are considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year. We will keep the current measures in place until evidence collected during the consultation has been analysed and Ministers have made a decision on the future of the temporary approval.

■ Arthritis: Females

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[21295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Women's Health Strategy will include a focus on the increased prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis among women; and whether that strategy will increase the tailored support available to women living with that condition.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The exact topics that will be addressed by the Women's Health Strategy have not yet been decided. The information gathered through the call for evidence will inform the priorities, content and actions in the new Women's Health Strategy for England.

■ Axel Heitmueller**Ben Bradley:**[\[20496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide details of all roles performed for his Department by Axel Heitmueller.

Jo Churchill:

Axel Heitmueller worked for NHS Test and Trace in the following roles: Director of Innovation and Partnerships; Director of Testing Strategy and Policy; and Director for overall Strategy and Innovation for NHS Test and Trace.

■ Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust: Cancer**Mark Menzies:**[\[20369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for cancer diagnostic tests at (a) Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and (b) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

Jo Churchill:

The Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust are part of the £160 million elective accelerator program, supporting them to increase activity levels to reduce waiting times.

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is working to establish rapid diagnostic centres, to improve pathways and ensure more patients are seen sooner. The Trust has established a working group with local cancer alliances to improve waiting times for endoscopy. The Trust is also introducing new roles such as advanced clinical practitioners in upper gastrointestinal and colorectal services to triage and assess patients early on to reduce waiting times.

■ Care Homes: North East**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[21150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of residential care home beds in the North East of England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: Local authorities are best placed to understand and plan for the care needs of their populations and to develop and build local market capacity. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have the duty to shape their local markets, ensure that people have a range of high-quality, sustainable and person-centred care and support options available to them. This includes adequate provision of care home beds to meet local needs. This Government is supporting local authorities to develop their local markets by providing them with over £1 billion of additional funding for social care in 2021/22.

■ Care Homes: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [\[21278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to increase the quality of care in all care settings.

Helen Whately:

As of June 2021, 84% of all social care settings were rated good or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.

We published a White Paper on 11 February 2021 which sets out proposals to develop, through the Health and Care Bill, an enhanced assurance framework for adult social care to support our drive to improve outcomes, readily identify and share best practice across the system and build on existing sector-led support and improvement programmes.

■ Carers: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[15311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on carers.

Helen Whately:

We continue to work with local authorities, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and stakeholders to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on carers. We have taken steps to help carers during the pandemic, including providing £11.6 million to charities to fund support, publishing tailored guidance, providing free personal protective equipment for those advised to use it, prioritising access to vaccinations and funding infection prevention and control measures in day and respite services.

■ Cereals: Consumption

Alex Norris: [\[22007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase wholegrain consumption in England.

Jo Churchill:

There is no agreed definition for the term wholegrain. 'Wholegrain' is generally used to describe products which contain a higher fibre content. The Government's dietary advice, as depicted by the Eatwell Guide, is that we should choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions of starchy carbohydrates wherever possible.

■ Clinical Trials

Alex Norris: [\[22008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the number of patients recruited to clinical trials in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

On 23 March 2021 the Government published its vision for the future of clinical research delivery in the United Kingdom. This aims to create a research system where all patients have the opportunity to take part. An implementation plan and strategy setting out how we will begin to deliver the vision in 2021/22 was published on 23 June.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Theresa Villiers:**[\[19513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to provide free covid-19 antibody tests to people with a diagnosis of cancer for whom those tests have been recommended.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: Free antibody testing is available through the National Health Service for people with a diagnosis of cancer when requested by clinicians, either for diagnostic purposes or to support clinical treatments. Antibody testing through our at-home testing service is currently only available to specific groups for research and surveillance purposes including people in those cohorts living with immune suppressed conditions.

Rachael Maskell:[\[20454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with the providers of PCR testing centres to ensure that there is an increase in PCR tests available to meet increasing infection levels.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: We will engage providers of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing as required to ensure test kits are available.

NHS Test and Trace monitors the forecasted balance of demand for PCR testing against available laboratory processing capacity and will look to procure additional laboratory processing capacity if necessary.

Crispin Blunt:[\[21127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS PCR tests contain latex; and what steps he is taking to ensure that people with allergies to latex have access to reliable covid-19 tests.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests are not made with natural rubber latex. However the presence or traces of natural rubber latex in the product as delivered to the end-user cannot be excluded completely due to the potential to come into contact with latex during transportation or handling processes. We are currently reviewing all aspects of PCR testing in light of this potential risk.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Julian Sturdy:**[\[10368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) assess the effectiveness of covid-19 vaccines for people with blood cancer and (b) establish a testing programme to clarify whether people with blood cancer retain compromised immune systems against covid-19 even after vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

All of the currently authorised COVID-19 vaccines are suitable for use in immunocompromised individuals, including those with blood cancer. The clinical studies for these vaccines excluded immunocompromised subjects and therefore no data is currently available regarding the use of these vaccines when used at the same time as immunosuppressant medicines or the immune response in those on such medications. However, data is being collected on use of the vaccines in immunocompromised subjects and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will assess this data as soon as it become available. Public Health England is also monitoring the impact of COVID-19 vaccines on a broad range of outcomes including symptomatic disease, infection and hospitalisations as set out in the vaccine surveillance strategy, including protection in different clinical risk groups.

Sir Christopher Chope:[\[20313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many applications have been made under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 for compensation arising from disability caused by covid-19 vaccinations; and how many of those applications have (a) been successful, (b) been rejected and (c) are under consideration.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: The Vaccine Damage Payment scheme is administered by the Department for Work and Pensions. As of 23 June, there have been 154 applications received under the scheme linked to COVID-19 vaccines, all of which have been acknowledged and claimants will be contacted if further information is required or when a decision is made on their claim.

Mike Amesbury:[\[20501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of giving a potential covid-19 booster vaccine to people with asthma who are eligible for a flu jab.

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.

We are seeking clinical advice on which groups in the population should be prioritised, informed by independent advice from the Joint Committee for Vaccination

and Immunisation (JCVI). The JCVI will review the emerging scientific evidence on co-administering the flu and COVID-19 vaccines safely, alongside data supplied by manufacturers, to inform the Government in the decision-making process.

Mike Amesbury: [\[20502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has made of the potential merits of using the chronic respiratory flu vaccination list for the purposes of rolling out a covid-19 booster vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) considering whether to advise a COVID-19 vaccine booster programme whether a potential programme should align with the groups which will receive the flu vaccination. The JCVI will issue advice in due course.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[20594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect on the retention of social care workers of the requirement for those workers to be vaccinated against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has made an impact assessment which it intends to publish in due course.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[21289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of immunosuppressive medication on the effectiveness of covid-19 vaccinations; and whether those living with inflammatory immune-mediated conditions taking such medication should be advised to shield as a result.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Virus Watch study, supported by NHS Test and Trace, shows a modestly reduced antibody response after one COVID-19 vaccine dose among individuals with immunosuppression, including those on immunosuppressive therapy. However, this is not a direct measure of protection and it is still early to determine impact on clinical disease or whether the antibody response remains after a complete course of vaccination.

Shielding was paused on 1 April 2021. Clinically extremely vulnerable people are advised to take the extra precautions provided by the Government to reduce their chance of infection and must continue to follow the current regulations.

Catherine West: [\[21303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 16141, what the planned timescale is for the upgrade to the App

to allow people who have taken part or are participating in a clinical trial to demonstrate their covid-19 vaccine status.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Allocated treatments in COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials are blinded, which means for scientific integrity the identity of their vaccinations cannot be revealed until the participant's involvement in the clinical trial concludes. Participating clinical trial sites have provided an interim letter to participants which certifies that they are in a clinical trial and should be recognised as vaccinated.

In July, we will add participants of COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials to COVID Pass, which can then be used to demonstrate their status in England at trial events and for any future potential domestic use. Those wishing to travel abroad should continue to seek guidance on COVID-19 status requirements for their destination country. Once the clinical trials are unblinded, the details of participants' specific COVID-19 vaccinations will be accessible on the NHS App in their COVID Pass.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[21869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 10 June 2021 to Question 10529, what recent advice he has received from (a) the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and (b) other experts on whether the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine should be offered to children aged 12 to 15 years who are (i) clinically extremely vulnerable and shielding, (ii) clinically extremely vulnerable and who meet two of the three current Green Book criteria of (A) severe neurodisabilities, (B) recurrent respiratory infections and (C) frequent stays in specialist residential settings and (iii) clinically extremely vulnerable; and when he plans to provide information to affected children and families.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation is examining the evidence and the relative risks and benefits of vaccinating children and young people and will provide advice to the Government in due course.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[21965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional resources he is making available to increase the vaccination rates of young people working in the hospitality sector.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[21966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional steps he is taking to vaccinate young workers who work in public facing roles.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Over a third of 18 to 24 year olds have already received their first vaccination in the week following the vaccine programme opening up to all adults. We have increased the accessibility of the vaccines in targeted locations in areas of lower vaccine uptake. On the weekend of 26 June, NHS England launched the 'grab a jab' weekend

in football stadiums, theatres, supermarket car parks and shopping centres, which allowed vaccinations to take place without needing to book in advance.

Rachael Maskell: [\[21967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to vaccinate 16 to 18 year olds against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 13 April, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on phase two of the vaccination programme, to continue prioritising people by age. Those aged 18 years old are prioritised for a vaccination as part of phase two and were able to book their vaccination from 18 June. We have made no decisions on the routine COVID-19 vaccination of children aged 16 to 17 years old.

■ **Dementia: Diagnosis**

Rachael Maskell: [\[21282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the rate of dementia diagnosis (a) nationally and (b) in York.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: The Government has made £17 million available to NHS England and NHS Improvement to reduce dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the dementia diagnosis rates at a regional and local sustainability and transformation partnership level to aid targeted efforts to support recovery of referrals, diagnosis, and, where appropriate, support access to post-diagnostic support.

In York, a specialist dementia nurse has been commissioned to work with primary care and identify and support people at high risk. A multi-disciplinary team approach is also being piloted for diagnosis and treatment in primary care where appropriate, with consultant support.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Freedom of Information**

Florence Eshalomi: [\[22062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many freedom of information requests has his Department referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested and to obtain it would incur disproportionate cost.

Since 2016, the Department has occasionally referred Freedom of Information requests to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in accordance with referral criteria, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-and-freedom-of-information>

■ Health Services: Females

Alex Norris: [22006]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what responsibility Integrated Care Systems will have for (a) maternity and (b) other women's health services; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Clinical commissioning group (CCG) functions and duties will transfer to integrated care boards when they are established, along with all CCG assets and liabilities, commissioning responsibilities and contracts. This includes functions, duties and responsibilities associated with maternity and other women's health services.

■ Hearing: Testing

Lilian Greenwood: [21196]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase access to suitable hearing checks for everyone.

Lilian Greenwood: [21197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to educate people on hearing health harm from amplified listening.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: Free hearing tests are available through general practitioners. Larger pharmacies and opticians can also carry out hearing tests. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with partners to ensure that appropriate hearing checks are carried out for children and young people with a learning disability, or who are autistic, in special residential schools.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance '5 ways to prevent hearing loss' is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/-5-ways-to-prevent-hearing-loss/>

■ Ivermectin

Mr David Jones: [21839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research his Department is undertaking on the efficacy of Ivermectin in the treatment of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is closely monitoring the evidence on the case for ivermectin as a treatment for COVID-19. On 23 June, the PRINCIPLE clinical trial platform announced that ivermectin would be investigated to generate robust data on its

effectiveness in treating adults aged 18 years old and over who are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19. We will closely monitor the data from this trial, as well as emerging evidence from the large number of clinical trials worldwide to expand our evidence-base on the efficacy of ivermectin.

■ Life Sciences: Research

Cat Smith: [\[20608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the criteria for the allocation of funding for life sciences that was announced in the Queen's Speech 2021 will prioritise research on (a) women's health and (b) safer medicines for pregnant women.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The exact topics that will be addressed by the Women's Health Strategy have not yet been decided. The evidence gathered through the call for evidence will inform the priorities, content and actions in the new Strategy.

Decisions over which individual research projects or programmes to support are made through independent evaluation by experts, based on the quality and likely impact of that research.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[14149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 17 March 2021 from the Hon. Member for West Lancashire, regarding water fluoridation, ref ZA55978.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 25 June 2021.

■ Mental Health Services: Fathers

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[17851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of fathers or partners bereaved by the death of a baby that are projected to receive support by the end of March 2022 from the new maternal mental health hubs announced in April 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no such estimate. Partners of women accessing care will be offered an evidence-based assessment and signposted to support, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan commitment for perinatal mental health services.

■ Mental Health Services: Females

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[21171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the need for greater integration of reproductive health services and psychological therapy for women who experience mental health issues.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: The Government launched a call for evidence to inform the development of the Women's Health Strategy, which asked for views on a range of issues including those related to reproductive health and mental health. The Department is analysing the responses and we aim to respond after the summer. The Strategy will be published by the end of the year.

The Department will also be developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which we plan to publish later this year. We will consider issues related to reproductive health, including access to contraception services in a range of settings. Departmental officials are ensuring coherence between the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Women's Health Strategies.

■ Myelodysplastic Syndromes: Drugs

Grahame Morris: [\[21879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure equitable access to Exjade for Myelodysplastic Syndrome patients across the country.

Jo Churchill:

Exjade (Deferasirox) is not licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to treat Myelodysplastic Syndrome. Clinicians are able to prescribe any product on the National Health Service they consider necessary for the treatment of their patient, unless it is listed in Schedules 1 or 2 to the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) Regulations 2004. This is known as off-label prescribing. The Department expects prescribers to satisfy themselves that the medicines they consider appropriate for their patients can be safely prescribed and that they take account of appropriate national guidance on clinical effectiveness. This prescribing decision is subject to the treatment being funded by the relevant commissioner.

Grahame Morris: [\[21880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) enable and (b) fund urgent access to the drug Luspatercept for extremely vulnerable transfusion-dependent RARS Myelodysplastic Syndromes patients in the absence of a NICE decision on the appraisal of that drug.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) appraisal of luspatercept for the treatment of anaemia caused by myelodysplastic syndromes has

been suspended because the company that manufactures the drug was unable to provide an evidence submission. NICE is working with the company to reschedule the appraisal of luspatercept once the company is in a position to provide an evidence submission. In the absence of NICE guidance on the use of a drug, clinicians are still able to prescribe luspatercept if they consider it appropriate for their patients, subject to the treatment being funded by the relevant commissioner. National Health Service commissioners are expected to take funding decisions based on an assessment of the available evidence and are required to have arrangements in place to consider individual funding requests.

■ **NHS: Computer Software**

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[20414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new downloads of the NHS Covid-19 App there have been in each month of 2021.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[20416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many individual users of the NHS Covid-19 App there have been in each month of 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold data in the format requested.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[20417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been notified of the need to self isolate by the NHS Covid-19 App in each month of 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold data in the format requested. Users can be asked to isolate for three reasons – contact tracing, reporting symptoms or entering a positive test and alerts sent for these reasons. The number of alerts sent by the NHS COVID-19 app for each of these reasons on a weekly basis is available at the following link:

<http://stats.app.covid19.nhs.uk>

■ **Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures**

Andrew Percy: [\[20600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the safety of cosmetic procedures being undertaken by non-licenced healthcare professionals.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In England cosmetic surgery may only be performed by doctors registered with the General Medical Council. Providers of surgery must also register with the Care Quality Commission and meet its fundamental standards of safety and quality.

The Government is evaluating the existing education and qualification frameworks for practitioners of non-surgical cosmetic procedures operating in England and

assessing options for improving standards. This includes consideration of whether increased oversight of practitioners performing some of the most invasive non-surgical procedures is needed and how to achieve a proportionate system of practitioner regulation that protects the public.

■ Obesity

Zarah Sultana:

[\[15412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure its Tackling Obesity Strategy does not promote crash diets.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 June 2021]: We carefully consider all views and potential impacts of our measures to reduce obesity and its effects on individual health. This includes feedback from a wide range of experts and stakeholders on specific policy proposals and in response to our public consultations.

Public Health England and the National Health Service are supporting local areas to increase weight management services, with the aim to reach population groups most in need. This includes local implementation of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines relating to obesity, which includes identification of obesity status and recommends appropriate weight management approaches to care and support individuals living with severe obesity. NICE's guidelines on obesity assessment, identification and management are available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg189/chapter/1-Recommendations>

■ Out of Area Treatment

Rachael Maskell:

[\[21284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure that people with complex needs do not have to be placed out-of-area.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: The NHS Long Term Plan commits to increased investment in community support for people with a learning disability and autistic people by 2023/24. This will enable more people to receive personalised care in the community, closer to home and will reduce preventable admissions to inpatient services.

■ Perinatal Mortality

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[21834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the outcome was of the national review by the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch to examine the reported recent increase in the number of stillbirths.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch's national review of Intrapartum stillbirths during the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing.

■ **Pharmacy****Stuart Anderson:**[\[21335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of pharmacists who have become independent prescribers.

Jo Churchill:

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the independent regulator of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain. The GPhC's register, which pharmacists must apply to for an annotation to be added to their register entry before practising as an independent prescriber, shows that as of June 2021 there are 9,252 independent pharmacist prescribers in England

■ **Podiatry: Coronavirus****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[17745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of community podiatric surgery services that have experienced (a) closure and (b) restrictions of referrals in the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 June 2021]: We have made no such estimate.

■ **Pregnancy: Coronavirus****Fleur Anderson:**[\[22032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the time between covid-19 vaccine doses for pregnant women in line with priority groups 1 to 9.

Nadhim Zahawi:

To protect those most vulnerable to COVID-19, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised that appointments for a second dose of the vaccine should be brought forward from 12 to eight weeks for those in priority cohorts one to nine. Pregnant women in these cohorts can therefore book their second dose eight weeks after their first.

Pregnant women are advised to discuss the risks and benefits of receiving the vaccination with their clinician.

■ Social Services

Rachael Maskell: [\[21286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what cross-party discussions (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have had on the Social Care Plan to date; when those discussions took place; and what further discussions are planned.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: My Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State wrote to Parliamentarians in March 2020 initiate cross-party discussions. These discussions were paused as a result of COVID-19. I met members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Adult Social Care to discuss priorities for reform and held roundtables with hon. Members regarding the adult social care elements of the Health and Care Bill.

The Government will continue to listen to views from hon. Members on improving social care. We will bring forward proposals for social care reform later in 2021.

■ Social Services: North East

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[21151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the demand for adult social care in (a) the North East of England and (b) Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency over the next decade.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: We have made no such estimate as local authorities are best placed to understand and plan for the care needs of their local populations.

■ Social Services: Reform

Rachael Maskell: [\[21285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a route map of the steps he plans to take to formulate his social care White Paper ahead of its publication.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: We are working closely with local and national partners to ensure our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives, including of those with lived experience of the care sector, ahead of bringing forward proposals later in 2021.

■ Spinal Injuries

Fleur Anderson: [\[16238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have sustained a spinal cord injury since March 2020, by level of injury.

Fleur Anderson:[\[16239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long each person in hospital with a spinal chord injury has been in that setting.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 June 2021]: The following table shows the number of acute spinal cord injury (SCI) patients referred for treatment in a SCI centre, by injury, since March 2020.

INJURY TYPE	NUMBER OF PATIENTS
High Tetraplegia	573
Low Tetraplegia	404
High Paraplegia	335
Low Paraplegia	369
Cauda Equina	350
Total	2,031

Source: National Spinal Cord Injury Database

The average length of stay of patients who are currently in a SCI centre is 72.8 days.

■ Surgery: Children

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[21230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children waiting for elective surgery in England.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[21231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have waited over (a) 16 weeks, (b) 6 months and (c) 12 months for elective surgery in England since April 2020.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Tourette's Syndrome

Conor McGinn:[\[14171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to invest in specialist Tourette's syndrome services and care across (a) St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group area, (b) the North West region and (c) England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: The majority of services for people with Tourette's syndrome are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), through local community paediatric services or child and adolescent mental health services, with the pathways varying across the country. These services will be appropriate for the majority of children and young people with Tourette's syndrome.

For those requiring specialist support, there are specialised tertiary services across the country with focused multidisciplinary teams assessing and supporting children with tics, Tourette's syndrome and motor stereotypies and their families. The potential commissioning of a local tertiary service for tics and Tourette's is under review by CCGs across the North West and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

NHS St Helens CCG has tasked its local providers to review the needs of children and young people from St Helens who have been discharged from Alder Hey Children's Hospital's Tourette's service in the preceding six months and has temporarily invested £30,000 to support this.

HOME OFFICE**■ Animal Experiments: Dogs****Alex Sobel:**[\[18574\]](#)

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, for what reason there has been a 16 per cent increase in dog use since 2017 in the context of dogs being given special protection under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986; and what steps the Government is taking to reduce and replace the use of dogs in experiments.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: The Home Office assures that, in every research proposal: animals are replaced with non-animal alternatives wherever possible; the number of animals are reduced to the minimum necessary to achieve the result sought; and that, for those animals which must be used, procedures are refined as much as possible to minimise their suffering.

The Home Office has made no assessment of why there was a 16% increase in the use of dogs since 2017.

Alex Sobel:[\[19664\]](#)

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, which legislative requirements were satisfied by the 252 procedures conducted on dogs to satisfy other legislation; and what tests were conducted in those cases.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer the Hon Member to the question he previously asked and the answer given on 23rd July 2020 to UIN 13060.

■ Criminal Investigation: EU Countries**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[21873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the prospects of the UK meeting the conditions for exchanging personal data under the EU Prüm framework for automated data exchange by 1 October 2021; and what plans she has for future UK participation in personal data exchange with EU authorities.

Kevin Foster:

Under the terms of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), within nine months of entry into force of the Agreement the UK's DNA and fingerprint capabilities under the Prüm framework will be evaluated.

The UK continues to exchange biometric data with connected EU Member States and judges it has met the requisite conditions for exchanging personal data. These are set out in Title II of Part 3 of the TCA.

More broadly, the UK continues to exchange personal data with our European partners for the purposes of law enforcement, including under the terms of the TCA, ensuring such data is appropriately protected.

■ Home Office: Training**Philip Davies:**[\[19551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 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.

Victoria Atkins:

Upon receipt of the direction from Civil Service HR that Unconscious Bias training was to be removed from the Civil Service core learning offer from January 2021 the Home Office HR Learning team communicated this change across the Home Office: directly to HR Directors and DGs on 11 January; via 'Management Matters' internal staff news bulletin on 14 January; and via the HR/Learning network newsletter on 20 January. This message was also conveyed in briefings to Trade Unions and Home Office People Committee during February.

In addition to the CO direction the Windrush Lesson Learned Review recommendation 29 stated that the Home Office should review its diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias awareness training. The training materials being developed for implementation from September 2021 will not include Unconscious Bias training, confirmed with the Permanent Secretary on 23 March.

■ Homicide

Philip Davies: [\[19536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 10275 on Homicide, in what format that information is held.

Philip Davies: [\[19537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 10276 on Homicide, in what format that information is held.

Philip Davies: [\[19538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 10277 on Homicide, in what format that information is held.

Kit Malthouse:

The information is held in the Home Office Homicide Index, a detailed record-level dataset on homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales. The Homicide Index is continually updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. Homicide cases are often complex and can take time to reach a conclusion.

■ Immigration: Afghanistan

Luke Pollard: [\[19671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to (a) hold further negotiations with the relevant local authorities and (b) assess alternative temporary accommodation for Afghan interpreters and their families accessing the Ex Gratia Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is continuing to engage actively with local authorities across England, Wales and Scotland to seek their support for relocating Afghan locally employed staff (LES) and their families.

Local authorities currently provide both accommodation and integration support to families. Whilst this remains the preferred approach, the Home Office is looking at further options to ensure families continue to be appropriately supported.

Luke Pollard: [\[19673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications from Afghan interpreters that were made from third countries have been refused by her Department.

Kevin Foster:

It is not possible for Afghan interpreters to make applications under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy from anywhere other than Afghanistan.

Therefore, no such applications have been received or refused.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Ruth Jones:****[19677]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of extending the deadline for EU citizens living in (a) Wales, (b) Scotland, (c) England and (d) Northern Ireland to register for the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

Having already received over 5.6m applications by the end of May 2021 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.

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

We have continued to receive and process thousands of applications a day to the EUSS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 5.2 million applications concluded by 31 May 2021.

We are committed to making sure everybody eligible for the scheme can apply, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. There is significant help available from a network of 72 organisations across the UK grant funded by the Home Office with £22 million to help vulnerable people apply to the EUSS, including after the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Lilian Greenwood:**[21885]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many eligible EU citizens living in Nottingham South constituency have (a) applied and (b) not yet applied for settled status.

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 ([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.

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

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

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

Lilian Greenwood: [21886]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens living in Nottingham South constituency are eligible to apply for settled status.

Lilian Greenwood: [21887]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many eligible EU citizens living in Nottingham South constituency have applied for settled status but will not have received their status by the deadline date of 30 June 2021.

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 ([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.

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

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

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

Patricia Gibson:

[\[21934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has provided the Department for Work and Pensions on the continued payment of universal credit to people who are (a) awaiting a decision about their EU Settled Status applications or (b) appealing a rejection of their EU Settled Status application.

Kevin Foster:

The Citizens' Rights (Application Deadline and Temporary Protection) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 protect existing relevant EU law rights. EEA citizens and their family members who were lawfully resident in the UK at the end of the transition period and apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) by the 30 June deadline, have their rights protected until the final determination of an application, including through any appeal.

There is a system-to-system service between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Home Office, which will in most cases confirm a pending application to the EUSS automatically.

We continue to work closely with DWP to ensure anyone whose rights are protected by making an in-time application to the EUSS will continue to receive benefits. DWP have provided staff with guidance.

Patricia Gibson:

[\[21936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to deploy additional staff to the EU Settlement Scheme Resolution Centre Helpline in response to the high volume of calls being made to that helpline as the deadline for applications approaches.

Kevin Foster:

Resource for the EUSS Resolution Centre is kept under close review and additional resource has been made available to support call handling.

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[21992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that naturalised EU citizens are not incorrectly advised to apply inappropriately to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The Government is using every possible channel to encourage everyone who is eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to apply.

The Home Office is working with HMRC and DWP to send letters to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens in receipt of benefits, but it appears have yet to apply to the EUSS. The letters encouraged recipients to apply to the EUSS to protect their existing rights in the UK before the deadline of 30 June 2021.

In trying to reach as many people as possible, there were a small number of instances where these letters were sent to recipients who were naturalised, or dual

British and EU citizens, or had other forms of immigration status. This may have included people who naturalised many years ago.

The letters made clear anyone who is a British citizen did not need to take any action. Further reassurance, providing the same messaging, was posted on the Home Office's, DWP's and HMRC's Twitter channels.

■ **Independent Office for Police Conduct**

Alex Sobel: [\[19669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time is for cases to be allocated to complaint handlers by the Independent Office for Police Conduct in 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold data on average times for cases to be allocated. The Independent Office for Police Conduct will write to the Honourable Member and I shall place a copy in the Library of the House.

■ **LGBT People: Birth Certificates**

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[20434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to enable birth certificates to be retrospectively amended to include both parents who are of the same sex; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

There are no current plans to assess the merits of retrospectively amending birth certificates for this purpose.

■ **Metropolitan Police: Recruitment**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[19639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the mechanism is for applicants to the Metropolitan Police Service to request sight of confidential disclosures made about them as part of the vetting process.

Kit Malthouse:

Police vetting is a matter for forces. They are required to follow the College of Policing's statutory code of practice on vetting, supported by the College's Authorised Professional Practice (APP) guidance on vetting.

The APP guidance outlines that forces should put allegations (recorded as intelligence) to the applicant where appropriate, taking into consideration factors such as the grading of the intelligence, potential for a source to be revealed, the threat to the wellbeing of a third party and/or the potential compromise of an operation or investigation.

All decisions and rationale for rejection should be communicated to the applicant in as much detail as possible, taking into account the circumstances of the case.

■ Migrants: Documents

Rachael Maskell: [\[20444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that migrants with a right to live in the UK have the documentation to prove that right.

Kevin Foster:

Everyone who is granted permission to live in the UK is given evidence of their immigration status in a secure format – either as a physical document (biometric residence permit or card) or in digital form (eVisa).

Some individuals receive both a card and an eVisa; others will only receive an eVisa. In addition to their evidence of immigration status they also receive a written notification of their grant of leave in the form of an email or letter, which they can keep for their personal records.

Due to the possibility of fraud and abuse this document cannot be used to evidence an individual's immigration status to external organisations.

The move to digital is part of the wider move to a border and immigration system which is digital by default, which means we will increasingly replace physical and paper-based products and services with accessible, easy to use online and digital services.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Building Safety Fund

Sarah Olney: [\[21989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the closing date for applications to the Building Safety Fund beyond 30 June 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 16009 on 21 June 2021.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Sarah Olney: [\[21990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will make support available to leaseholders whose building insurance premiums have increased since unsafe building materials were found following EWS1 surveys.

Christopher Pincher:

We are aware that some leaseholders are finding their buildings insurance premiums are increasing, or insurance is unobtainable, where their block has building safety concerns.

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

The Government has provided an unprecedented investment of £5 billion to protect leaseholders from the costs of cladding remediation and ensure no leaseholder will ever pay more than £50 a month to remove cladding, as part of a new Government-backed scheme.

We will continue to engage with the insurance industry to address the issue of increased building insurance premiums and encourage them to take a proportionate approach to risk.

■ Community Development**John Howell:**[\[21854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies on tackling community inequalities of the debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 24 June 2021 on a European policy on diasporas.

Eddie Hughes:

The UK is committed to creating a fair society in which all people are valued and able to participate fully and realise their own potential. We have made great strides to become a fairer and more tolerant society, but we must acknowledge that there is so much more to do in eradicating prejudice and creating opportunity. We supported the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly debate on a European policy on diasporas on 24 June, and note that the resolution and recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review. We will continue to engage with international institutions as this work progresses.

■ Factory Farming: Planning**Daisy Cooper:**[\[19703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will review national planning policy to strengthen provisions on the expansion of intensive broiler factories; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a range of policies which seek to ensure that the impacts of all types of development are carefully considered when planning decisions are taken. Intensive broiler factories, exceeding a certain size or capacity, are subject to additional rules, such as environmental impact

assessment (EIA) regulations, which inform decision making and take environmental impacts into account when deciding whether to grant planning consent. In addition, environmental permits require farmers with intensive poultry enterprises, of over 40,000 poultry places, to ensure they operate the farm using Best Available Techniques (BAT) to protect people and the environment.

The 'Planning for the Future' White Paper makes clear that we want planning reforms to leave a legacy of environmental improvement. The White Paper received over 40,000 responses and we are in the process of analysing the feedback received. We are also taking forward work to reform the environmental assessment framework as part of that process that will help maximise environmental benefits, recognising the importance of our domestic and international obligations for environmental protection.

■ **Fracking: Planning Permission**

Lee Rowley: [\[19663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many extant planning permissions there are which permit the construction of fracking sites.

Christopher Pincher:

The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government does not collect data at this level of detail. We do collect statistics on applications for oil and gas development but without distinguishing the method (such as hydraulic fracturing) by which the oil or gas is extracted from the ground. The data is publicly available and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics>.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Freedom of Information**

Florence Eshalomi: [\[22065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many freedom of information requests has his Department referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Eddie Hughes:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has referred requests to the Cabinet Office 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>.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Training**

Philip Davies: [\[19552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 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.

Eddie Hughes:

Prior to the written statement of 15 December, MHCLG signposted colleagues to the Unconscious Bias online learning provided by Civil Service Learning (CSL) via the Learning Platform for Government (LPG). This learning was removed from the platform by CSL in line with the written statement and can no longer be accessed by MHCLG colleagues. MHCLG colleagues have not been signposted to alternative unconscious bias training and the Department has not designed or delivered any bespoke unconscious bias training designed specifically for an MHCLG audience.

■ **Tree Preservation Orders**

Gareth Thomas:

[\[19484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of compensating or indemnifying local authorities for any financial damages they may be asked to pay, in respect of legal challenge by residents and businesses, as a result of non-removal of Tree Preservation Orders from protected trees; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government recognises the value of trees, including their support for biodiversity, their relationship to landscape and amenity, their contribution to health and mitigating climate change and, in many cases, their rarity and role as part of our cultural heritage. The Tree Preservation Order (TPO) system is an important method of protecting trees and woodlands of amenity value.

The Town and Country Planning Regulation 2012 clearly sets out that an authority is only liable to pay compensation for damage caused by TPO trees in certain circumstances; there are strict criteria and limitations. This is also set out in our Planning Practice Guidance.

This year, the Government has made available an increase in Core Spending Power in England from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms. This recognised the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain current service levels.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Coronavirus: International Cooperation**

Gareth Thomas:

[\[21804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she will allow low- and middle-income countries to waive intellectual property rights on covid-19 (a) vaccines, (b) therapies and (c) diagnostics in line with Indian and South African government's proposal at the World Trade Organisation to allow the necessary scale-up in production required.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer the Hon. Gentleman for Harrow West to the answer I gave to the Hon. Gentleman for Birkenhead on 17th May 2021 (UIN: 448).

■ Department for International Trade: Caribbean Community**Ruth Jones:**[\[19688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she last met representatives of CARICOM.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Ministers regularly engage with their Caribbean Community (CARICOM) counterparts.

I last discussed trade with my counterparts, including the new Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM)-United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement, in March 2021.

■ Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information**Cat Smith:**[\[21938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many freedom of information requests her Department has referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 June 2021 to Question UIN: 15188.

■ Department for International Trade: Northern Ireland**Hywel Williams:**[\[21833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 17695 on Investment and Trade: Wales, what her Department's allocated budget is for the (a) establishment and (b) running of the proposed trade and investment hub in Northern Ireland.

Graham Stuart:

The budget allocated to the Department for International Trade (DIT) Northern Ireland hub for the current financial year is £366,138 to cover staff pay for the initial team. We expect costs to increase as our delivery progresses under the Places for Growth programme, which will see DIT grow its presence in Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast and Darlington. The budget allocated for running the DIT Northern Ireland hub in future years will be determined after the upcoming spending review has concluded.

■ Department for International Trade: Wales**Hywel Williams:**[\[21832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 17695 on Investment and Trade: Wales, what her Department's

allocated budget is for the (a) establishment and (b) running of the proposed trade and investment hub in Scotland.

Graham Stuart:

The budget allocated to the Department for International Trade (DIT) Scotland hub for the current financial year is £714,394 to cover staff pay for the initial team. We expect costs to increase as our delivery progresses under the Places for Growth programme, which will see DIT grow its presence in Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast and Darlington. The budget allocated for running the DIT Scotland hub in future years will be determined after the upcoming spending review has concluded.

■ **Imports**

Mike Amesbury:

[\[20498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of costs for UK Importers; and what steps her Department is taking to help prevent price fixing in the global container shipping industry.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Container shipping costs are currently high, driven by increased demand as a result of a change in pandemic consumer spending. The levels of demand have meant that port and shipping container capacity has been stretched globally.

The Department for Transport has engaged closely with both ports and shipping lines to monitor the operational impacts, and make sure industry is doing all it can to mitigate impacts on the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom has robust competition laws, and the Competition and Markets Authority has discretion to investigate competition cases which, according to its own prioritisation principles, it considers most appropriate.

■ **Trade: Unfair Practices**

Bill Esterson:

[\[21890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has to revise the regulations of the Trade Remedies Authority.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government designed a robust trade remedies framework to protect producers across the United Kingdom, but the world has changed since 2018 when it was initiated.

The Secretary of State is exploring her options to tackle unfair trading practices, unexpected surges of imports, and market-distorting practices, so her powers can be better tailored to the needs of British industry. Of course, trade remedies are only one part of the United Kingdom's unilateral toolkit.

■ UK Trade with EU: Food and Livestock**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[21870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the proposed future UK-Australia trade deal on the (a) UK's and (b) EU's ability to agree a veterinary agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary rules on movements of animals and food products.

Greg Hands:

The UK-Australia deal protects the rights and freedom of both countries to regulate to uphold standards. Both the UK and Australia agree the importance of independent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regimes.

The agreement allows the UK to cooperate with both Australia and the EU on avoiding unnecessary SPS barriers to trade in agri-food goods without constraining the UK's right to regulate in these areas.

The UK's sovereignty will be fully respected as an independent trading nation.

JUSTICE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Simon Jupp:** [\[901946\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support the recovery of the justice system after the covid-19 outbreak.

Alex Chalk:

In response to the pressures of the pandemic, prisons moved rapidly to prevent infection and minimise loss of life, the Probation Service introduced new delivery models, and in Courts and Tribunals we made quick safety adjustments to court buildings meaning that we were among the first internationally to re-start jury trials.

We remain committed to our continued recovery, rolling out vaccination in prisons, getting cases heard more quickly, and accelerating efforts to increase capacity. We will continue to innovate and improve so that we can build back better.

Christian Wakeford: [\[901947\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of fraudulent whiplash claims.

Alex Chalk:

We implemented several important reforms on 31 May to tackle the problems associated with whiplash which will cut costs, reduce fraud and lower motor insurance premiums.

We have introduced a tariff of damages for whiplash injuries, banned pre-medical offers to settle such claims and increased the small claims track limit to £5,000 for road accident related personal injury claims.

Genuinely injured claimants will be supported through a new digital Portal enabling them to settle claims without legal advice.

Matt Rodda: [\[901950\]](#)

What progress he has made on a review into the Reading terror attack in June 2020.

Alex Chalk:

This was a terrible crime, and the Court imposed a whole life order on Khairi Saadallah. The Probation Service has completed a Serious Further Offence (SFO) review into how Saadallah was managed, which is being shared with the bereaved families and with surviving victims.

An independent reviewer is also undertaking a Serious Case Review looking at how the relevant agencies worked together under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to manage the risk he posed.

Sarah Olney: [\[901952\]](#)

What steps he is taking to reduce the number of women in prisons.

Alex Chalk:

We recognise the benefits of diverting female offenders away from prison where appropriate.

That is why we have committed to piloting Residential Women's Centres for women at risk of short custodial sentences, where they will be supported to address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour and to move-on to settled accommodation. The first centre will be located in south Wales.

I am pleased to say that there has been a 26% decrease in the female prison population in just over a decade.

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[901954\]](#)

If he will take steps to invite all magistrates under the age of 75 who were automatically retired at the age of 70 to state whether or not they wish to rejoin the Bench.

Alex Chalk:

When the new judicial mandatory retirement age comes into force, there will be a transitional provision to enable retired magistrates to apply to return to the bench, subject to business need.

We will be contacting recently retired magistrates later this year to invite them to express their interest in rejoining the bench.

■ Contempt of Court: Gender Recognition

Sir Edward Leigh: [\[19486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference the advice of Chapter 12 of the Equal Treatment Bench Book, what assessment has been made of the potential effect of the advice that the court may consider making reporting restrictions under section 4 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981 to prevent disclosure of a transgender person's previous

name and transgender history or it may direct a private hearing on the freedom of the press.

Chris Philp:

To preserve the independence of the judiciary, the Lord Chief Justice, the Senior President of the Tribunals, and the Chief Coroner have statutory responsibility for judicial training, under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, and Coroners and Justice Act 2009 respectively. These responsibilities are exercised through the Judicial College and are outside the remit of the Ministry of Justice which means that no assessment is undertaken by the Ministry of Justice of its effect.

The Equal Treatment Bench Book (ETBB), reviewed by a judicial editorial panel, with content from judicial experts and other subject experts including academics and external bodies, is a general guidance document designed to encourage effective communication between all court users. It is not legally binding on judges or court users, who are free to decide what is appropriate in any given set of circumstances.

The content referred to in chapter 12 reflects the current law in the Gender Recognition Act 2004 regarding the revealing of transgender history of applicants for a Gender Recognition Certificate. It is for individual judges to balance reporting restrictions with the requirements of open justice in any particular case involving a transgender person where transgender history is not at all relevant to the subject of the proceedings.

■ **Courts: Wales**

Ruth Jones:

[\[19682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase court capacity in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales.

Chris Philp:

Recovering from the impacts of Covid-19 and keeping our court and tribunal premises safe and open is HMCTS' top priority. We have introduced a range of important measures to increase available court capacity, including the installation of plexiglass screens, the opening of Nightingale courts and use of virtual hearings.

In Wales we have opened a Nightingale court at Swansea Civic Centre, providing additional Crown Court capacity. We have installed temporary modular buildings at Caernarfon and Swansea Crown Courts to facilitate jury trials by creating additional space for deliberation, and we are utilising space at Cardiff City Hall to house jurors in waiting, thus enabling more courtrooms in Cardiff Crown Court to accommodate jury trials. We have also completed estates work that has increased our ability to hear multi-handler trials by increasing defendant dock capacity across four Crown courtrooms in Wales.

In Newport, all Crown and Magistrates Courts rooms are open with social distancing measures in place. We have also conducted estates work to increase Crown Court defendant capacity for multi-handed trials so that the court can now hear cases with

up to seven defendants. Similarly, all Civil, Family and Tribunal sites in Newport are open and remote hearings are also being effectively utilised.

We continue to keep our recovery plans for Wales and Newport under close review.

■ **Marriage: Humanism**

Ian Mearns: [\[21189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing temporary legal recognition to humanist marriage ceremonies in the same way that temporary legal recognition has been granted to outdoor civil ceremonies until April 2022.

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 (including humanist marriage) on the basis of the Law Commission's recommendations.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Freedom of Information**

Angela Rayner: [\[21922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Freedom of Information requests have been referred by his Department for advice on handling to the Cabinet Office's clearing house for Freedom of Information requests in each year since 2016.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice has referred requests to the Cabinet Office 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>.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Training**

Philip Davies: [\[19546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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 Philp:

In December 2020, the Government Equalities Office commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team for a summary of the evidence on unconscious bias and diversity training. The report highlighted that 'there is currently no evidence that this training changes behaviour in the long term or improves workplace equality in terms of

representation of women, ethnic minorities or other minority groups'. It also states that there is emerging evidence of unintended negative consequences.

In light of these findings, Ministers concluded that the unconscious bias learning provision did not achieve its aims and should be phased out in the Civil Service.

The Ministry of Justice has taken the following actions to phase out Unconscious Bias training.

In December 2020, department Senior Leadership Group directors, along with HR practitioners in Learning & Development and Diversity & Inclusion, were alerted to the withdrawal of Unconscious Bias training. Guidance explained that MoJ group should also look to wind-up the use of unconscious bias stand-alone products.

The same information was also cascaded through the Diversity & Inclusion and Learning & Development networks in department business areas, staff support networks and through subject champions.

The Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing team is currently refreshing the strategic approach to diversity and inclusion. In the meantime, staff who are looking for diversity training are encouraged to make use of 'Inclusion in the Civil Service', a revised version of Diversity and Inclusion that has been added to the Civil Service Learning website. This includes four modules:

1. Equality, diversity and inclusion in the Civil Service
2. Our inclusive workplace
3. Our customers
4. The legal framework

Unconscious Bias has also been removed from the department Learning Management System and the 'Essential Learning' learner pathway has been updated to include 'Inclusion in the Civil Service' instead.

■ **Prison and Probation Service: Crimes of Violence**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[19558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the (a) decisions taken and (b) processes in place to protect staff at Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in the period leading up to the stabbing of a prison officer at HMP Swansea on 12 June 2021.

Alex Chalk:

A prison officer at HMP Swansea attended hospital following an assault by a prisoner on 12 June. The incident was resolved quickly and our thoughts are with the injured officer at this time.

The incident has been referred to the police and, in line with usual practice, an internal review of the incident has been commissioned to look at the decisions taken

prior to the incident. This review is ongoing and it would not be appropriate to comment at this time.

We are committed to prisons being a safe place to work and providing prison officers with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs.

We do not tolerate violence on our hardworking officers, and we will work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to bring perpetrators to justice.

We are giving officers tools like PAVA pepper spray and body-worn cameras to make their jobs safer, as well as access to post incident care teams, occupational health support and counselling for those who need it. We are spending £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars. This is funding tough measures including X-ray body scanners, drug dogs and phone-blocking technology.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[19559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service has taken to increase staff safety across the prisons network following the stabbing of a prison officer at HMP Swansea on 12 June 2021.

Alex Chalk:

A prison officer at HMP Swansea attended hospital following an assault by a prisoner on 12 June. The incident was resolved quickly and our thoughts are with the injured officer at this time.

Violence against our hard-working prison officers is unacceptable and will never be tolerated.

We work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to bring the perpetrators to justice. We are committed to making prisons a safe place to work and providing prison officers with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs safely.

We are introducing PAVA – a synthetic pepper spray – to protect staff and prisoners from incidents where there is serious violence, or an imminent or perceived risk of serious violence. We want to ensure PAVA defuses tensions, not creates them. This is why only prisons which have rolled out the key worker scheme will get PAVA. Alongside the rollout of PAVA we are introducing a new Personal Safety package; SPEAR (Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response), so PAVA will be introduced as part of a wider package of skills for staff to resolve and deescalate incidents.

We continue to support the effective use of the 6,000 Body Worn Video Cameras across the estate, which can provide high-quality evidence to support prosecutions.

Prisons are required to have safe systems of work in place for items that present a risk to personal safety, for example razors.

We also provide care teams, occupational health support and counselling for members of staff across the estate.

■ Prisons: Females

Ellie Reeves: [\[19655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many temporary cells were installed in women's prisons since April 2020 to limit the spread of covid-19 in prisons.

Ellie Reeves: [\[19656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's announcement of 23 January 2021, which sites have been identified for the building of 500 new prison places for women.

Alex Chalk:

In response to 19655, A total of 112 temporary accommodation cells have been installed and are available for use in the women's estate at HMP & YOI Drake Hall, HMP & YOI East Sutton Park, HMP Foston Hall and HMP & YOI Askham Grange to limit the spread of covid-19 in the women's prison estate.

In response to 19656, the expansion of the women's prison estate is still at a relatively early feasibility investigation stage. However, the initial sites under consideration are: HMP Drake Hall, HMP Eastwood Park, HMP Foston Hall, HMP Send and HMP Styal. Final decisions will only be taken on each site once surveys and investigations have been completed, and after the established local consultation and planning application processes have been concluded. All sites are existing women's prisons and there are currently no plans to expand places for women anywhere else as part of this project.

■ Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre

Ruth Jones: [\[19680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the announcement, Lord chancellor takes immediate action to move children from Rainsbrook, published on 16 June 2021, what recent steps he has taken to tackle issues at Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre.

Alex Chalk:

Following the invoking of the Urgent Notification protocol at Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC) last December, we ordered the provider MTC to take the immediate action necessary to address the unacceptable failings at Rainsbrook, including a focus on ensuring all children in the Reverse Cohorting Unit had a suitable amount of time out of their room. During this period, the Youth Custody Service (YCS) enhanced monitoring activity at the centre whilst deploying an experienced senior manager to the centre to provide additional support and operational oversight.

Ofsted acknowledged that issues relating to children reverse cohorting at the centre have been addressed, and that the YCS had strengthened its oversight of the STC. It is clear, however, in particular throughout May, that measures taken have not been sufficient to resolve the long-standing issues round staffing, safety, and on-site

operational grip. That is why we are currently transferring all children out of the centre to alternative secure accommodation, with around a third of the children having already transferred from Rainsbrook.

Whilst our focus remains on ensuring the wellbeing of the children during the ongoing transfer process, work is separately ongoing with regard the future of the centre. A further announcement will be made on this in due course.

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

Ruth Jones:

[\[19679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what most recent steps his Department has taken to improve the (a) prosecution and (b) conviction rates for rape in (i) Newport West constituency, (ii) Wales and (iii) England.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has recognised that the decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being prosecuted in England and Wales is a cause for significant concern and has carried out an end-to-end review into this topic.

The review revealed wide-ranging reasons behind the fall in cases reaching court, including delays in the investigation process, a lack of specialist and consistent support for victims, and an increase in invasive requests for their personal data. We have published an ambitious Action Plan seeks to directly address these issues and increase the number of cases being referred by the police, referred to the CPS and getting to court, no matter where they are across England and Wales.

Steps being taken include better data extraction technology, launching new pathfinder projects that involve greater focus on perpetrators' offending patterns and further piloting of pre-recorded cross examination.

■ Youth Custody: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones:

[\[19681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the over-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic children in youth custody.

Alex Chalk:

We want people to have confidence in a justice system that is fair and open—one where no person suffers discrimination of any sort.

We continue to prioritise the understanding and tackling of disparity within the youth justice system.

The MoJ Youth Justice Policy Unit, the Youth Justice Board and the Youth Custody Service work closely together in seeking to tackle racial disparities in the youth justice system. Work in this area includes providing the tools and data to help frontline youth justice services to understand the needs of ethnic minority children, work with the Magistrates' Association to build awareness of disproportionality among sentencers, securing over £1m in funding to use physical activity to improve outcomes for 11,000

ethnic minority children at risk of entering the criminal justice system and delivering wide-ranging work in the Youth Custody Service on workforce diversity, capturing the voices of children in setting YCS culture, driving forward local plans to address disproportionality and staff training on difference and cultural needs.

More broadly, work directly within the youth justice system can only partially address inequalities, as 'upstream' factors which increase the likelihood of a child appearing in the youth justice system are also disproportionate. Cross Government work on education, health and policing, all important areas upstream of MoJ's remit, recognises the importance of equalities.

TRANSPORT

■ Cycling and Walking

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[19719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to encourage commuters to walk, cycle and use public transport as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is investing an unprecedented £2 billion of dedicated funding in cycling and walking over this Parliament, which will enable local authorities across England to deliver safer walking and cycling routes in their areas, making it easier and more attractive for commuters to walk and cycle to work. The National Bus Strategy, published on 15 March 2021 and backed by £3 billion of transformational funding, will deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered. We are also working with the rail industry to develop a number of recovery initiatives, focused on restoring passenger confidence in travelling by rail, including introducing new flexible season tickets for commuters.

■ Department for Transport: Freedom of Information

Cat Smith:

[\[21939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many freedom of information requests his Department has referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The information requested can only be provided at disproportionate cost, as we do not have a central record of referrals to the clearing house over this period.

■ Driving Licences

Bill Esterson:

[\[21888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the backlog in online driving licence renewal applications on drivers whose licences

expired after 31 December 2020 who have not benefited from an 11 month extension to their licences; and if he will introduce a further extension for driving licences which expired after 31 December 2020.

Bill Esterson: [\[21889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how long drivers have waited on average for online driving licence renewal applications to be processed in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) online service is the quickest and easiest way to apply for a driving licence. Successful applications are processed immediately, and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

The DVLA sends renewal reminder forms to customers two months before licences are due to expire to ensure drivers know when they need to apply to renew their licence. These will also be sent to drivers whose licences were extended by 11 months, allowing drivers time to make their renewal application and the forms can also be used to renew a licence online or at a post office. There are no plans for further extensions to driving licence validity.

■ **East Coast Railway Line and High Speed 2 Railway Line: Fares**

Rachael Maskell: [\[19632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made comparative assessment of the estimated price of a standard class seat between London and York travelling on (a) HS2 and (b) the East Coast Main Line.

Andrew Stephenson:

An assessment as not been made but the detailed decisions on HS2 fares and services will be taken closer to the time the railway goes into operation. However, the Business Case for HS2 does not assume that tickets for the line are priced at a premium level.

■ **Electric Scooters: Public Places**

Margaret Ferrier: [\[19609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the viability of permitting e-scooter use (a) on roads, (b) on cycle lanes and (c) in other public spaces.

Rachel Maclean:

In July 2020 the Department made regulations to enable trials of rental e-scooters to take place. The trials will allow us to assess the safety of e-scooters and their wider impacts, before deciding whether they should be more widely and permanently legalised. 32 trials are underway in England and will run across the year, with final trial schemes due to conclude by 31 March 2022. This is an extension to the original deadline of 30 November 2021. It takes into account the slower start to trials as a

result of the pandemic and will allow us more time to gather evidence as lockdown eases.

E-scooters in trial areas are permitted on roads, cycle lanes and tracks where the local authority considers it safe to do so, but they are not permitted on the pavement or on motorways. We have a comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation programme in place which will allow us to assess the impact of e-scooters.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Construction

Rachael Maskell: [\[19628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress has been made on HS2 Phase 2b Eastern Leg.

Rachael Maskell: [\[19629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans for the HS2 Phase 2b Eastern Leg to go to York.

Rachael Maskell: [\[19630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to extend HS2 north of York to Newcastle and Scotland.

Rachael Maskell: [\[19631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what resources will be made available for platform alterations at York Station to accommodate HS2.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Eastern Leg of Phase 2b is being considered by the Integrated Rail Plan which will consider the sequencing and delivery of HS2, as well as Northern Powerhouse Rail and other major rail schemes to ensure the benefits of these investments are delivered to passengers and communities more quickly. We intend to publish the IRP soon.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[19633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefits of HS2 to York.

Andrew Stephenson:

The High Speed Two Phase Two business case, published in July 2017, sets out the benefits of the phase 2b route from the West Midlands to Leeds (Eastern Leg), including to York. On the Eastern leg, the Integrated Rail Plan will consider how to sequence delivery to ensure benefits are realised sooner. It will also ensure the Eastern leg is integrated with plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail and other rail investment projects, to get the best out of the significant investment in rail. The Integrated Rail Plan will be published soon.

■ Level Crossings: Oxfordshire**Layla Moran:** [\[22015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of safety cameras at level crossings that have been turned off and are still off in (a) Oxfordshire and (b) Oxford West and Abingdon constituency (i) since 1 January 2021 and (ii) to date.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

No cameras deployed on level crossings within Oxfordshire or the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency have been switched off, or remain off, since 1 January 2021.

This reflects that the safety of users of level crossings in Oxfordshire and across the Network Rail estate are of paramount importance.

■ Parking: Pedestrian Areas**Caroline Lucas:** [\[19562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's consultation on managing pavement parking that closed on 22 November 2020, when his Department plans to publish its response to that consultation; whether he plans to bring forward proposals to amend existing pavement parking legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department received over 15,000 responses to the consultation. We are carefully considering the consultation findings and the results will inform our policy decisions. We will be publishing a response when we have completed this work, which is a priority.

■ Railway Stations: Tickets**Ian Mearns:** [\[21881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to ensure that railway passengers are consulted on potential ticket office closures.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) sets out the process for making changes to ticket offices, which includes changing the hours they are open or proposing any closures. The TSA requires consultation with Transport Focus and London Travel Watch. This agreement is still in place and rail operators must follow this as it is a requirement of their Office of Rail and Road operating licence.

Ian Mearns: [\[21882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to ensure that Transport Focus and London TravelWatch consult with passengers on proposals to close ticket offices.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) sets out the process for making changes to ticket offices, which includes changing the hours they are open or proposing any closures. The TSA requires consultation with Transport Focus and London Travel Watch. This agreement is still in place and rail operators must follow this as it is a requirement of their Office of Rail and Road operating licence.

Ian Mearns:[\[21883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions (a) he and (b) his officials have had with representatives of (i) Rail Delivery Group, (ii) Transport Focus and (iii) London Travel Watch on removing the right of passengers to be (A) consulted on and (B) able to object to ticket office closures.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

No such discussions have taken place. Schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) sets out the process for making changes to ticket offices, which includes changing the hours they are open or proposing any closures. The TSA requires consultation with Transport Focus and London Travel Watch. This agreement is still in place and rail operators must follow this as it is a requirement of their Office of Rail and Road operating licence.

■ Railway Stations: Visual Impairment**Sarah Olney:**[\[21991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it will be in the remit of the Office of Rail and Road to authorise new rail stations without tactile paving.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The authorisation of new stations will be in the remit of the ORR. However, I would not expect any new station to be designed without tactile paving in the first place.

I have also asked Network Rail to develop a plan to equip all existing platforms with tactile paving and expect to make an announcement shortly.

TREASURY**■ Bank Services: Coronavirus****Jim Shannon:**[\[20408\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with banks on the return of full banking services in store as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

John Glen:

Throughout the pandemic the Government has worked closely with the financial regulators and banking industry to ensure they continue to maintain branch access for essential services while balancing the needs of their customers with the safety and welfare of staff. The vast majority of branches have remained open, though some have operated at reduced hours.

Though it is up to individual firms what services they offer in branches, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has expected firms throughout the pandemic to continue to ensure essential services are available for vulnerable customers.

Customers also continue to be able to use other channels, such as telephone, online and mobile banking. 95% of business and 99% of personal customers are also able to carry out their everyday banking at over 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[22041\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the Government's response to the Small Brewers Relief (SBR) technical consultation.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury is in the process of analysing responses to the technical consultation and is working closely with HMRC to understand the technical implications of reform. We will provide further updates in due course.

■ **Carbon Emissions: Public Expenditure**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[20584\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to align departmental comprehensive spending review submissions with the Government's net zero target.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously. On 27 June 2020 the UK became the first major economy in the world to legislate to end its contribution to global warming by 2050, increasing the ambition of our commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Change Act 2008.

At Spending Review 2020, HMT asked departments to provide the greenhouse gas emissions of their spending proposals, their impact on meeting Carbon Budgets and Net Zero, and information relating to delivery of the 25 Year Environment Plan. This was considered as part of funding allocations made at SR20. HMT is reviewing the learning from this exercise and these issues will remain at the forefront of HMT's priorities for this year. The details of Spending Review 2021 will be announced in due course.

■ **Companies: Off-payroll Working**

Dean Russell:

[\[21352\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that limited companies are not adversely affected by the changes to the off-payroll working rules.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have a dedicated off-payroll working education and support team to assist taxpayers. Their assistance includes webinars, one-to-one calls and workshops, to help those affected to apply the rules correctly.

The Government has set out its intention to commission independent research into the effects of the reform on the private and voluntary sectors, which will take place six months after the reform has taken effect. This will be presented to Parliament.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Chi Onwurah:**[\[21216\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of delaying the obligation for businesses to contribute 10 per cent towards the cost of furloughed employees' wages for the duration of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Jesse Norman:

The existing timetable to reintroduce employer contributions in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme aims to strike the right balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work as demand returns.

In July, employers will therefore be asked to contribute 10% of wages for hours not worked up to £312.50 per month. This is the same approach that the Government successfully introduced last autumn, when comparable restrictions were in place and, as employees came off furlough, the vast majority returned to work. The economy is also in a stronger growth position now than it was last autumn, and the labour market is stronger too, with 5.5 million fewer people on furlough than in April 2020, and online job vacancy levels in June about 27% above February 2020 levels.

■ Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**Bob Blackman:**[\[20377\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information he holds on whether Capita has destroyed any of the archived historic personal and payment data transferred to it by NS&I on the 895,000 non-WPA Equitable Life policyholders who received payments from the Equitable Life Policy Scheme for 22.4 per cent of their losses.

Bob Blackman:[\[20378\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 8586 on Equitable Life Assurance Society, what information he holds on whether any records relating to the Equitable Life Payments Scheme other than those needed to (a) ensure the accuracy of ongoing payments and (b) respond to queries in relation to payments that have already been made have been destroyed.

John Glen:

I refer the Honourable Member for Harrow East to the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury's letter of 24 May 2021 to the Public Accounts Committee. This is available at: committees.parliament.uk/publications/6221/documents/69032/default/

■ Infrastructure: Finance**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[22039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Infrastructure and Projects Authority will be publish an updated National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline, last published in November 2018.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given to UIN 21353 on 28 June 2021.

■ Insurance Companies: Departmental Responsibilities**Bill Wiggin:** [\[21836\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Government department holds responsibility for the insurance industry.

John Glen:

HM Treasury is responsible within Government for insurance and wider financial services policy, including the statutory framework for its regulation and the continued effective operation of the regulators.

Conduct and solvency issues in the insurance sector are the responsibility of the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority respectively. The Treasury has strictly limited powers in relation to these organisations, which are operationally independent regulators.

■ Net Zero Review**Alex Sobel:** [\[20495\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 3084 on Net Zero Review, for what reason his Department did not publish the final report of his Department's Net Zero Review in spring 2021; and what recent progress his Department has made on publishing that report.

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.

Alexander Stafford: [\[20583\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to include an assessment of the potential economic merits of reaching net zero in his Net Zero Review; and when he plans to publish the final outcome of that review.

Alexander Stafford: [\[20588\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of ensuring an equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of net zero in its 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.

Alan Brown: [\[21950\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Treasury's Net Zero review will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Abena Opong-Asare: [\[22042\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

■ **Research: Finance**

Cat Smith:

[\[20606\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Minister is responsible 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 and Development. Departmental allocations are determined at Spending Reviews.

■ **Tourism and Travel: Coronavirus**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[21841\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2021 to Question 12080 on Tourism and Travel: Coronavirus, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of replicating travel agent support packages seen in some European countries that (a) refund lost commissions and (b) give sector specific grants of a percentage of usual turnover.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government appreciates the significant disruption the pandemic has had on travel agents and companies facing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor including, the COVID loans schemes and extended furlough.

In England, travel agents can benefit from the £5 billion package of grant support announced at Budget. This includes Restart Grants worth up to £6,000 if classified as non-essential retail or up to £18,000 if classified as a leisure or accommodation business. This package of support also includes the £425 million top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant which has already provided Local Authorities (LAs) with £1.6 billion. This funding is at the LAs discretion and is intended to support businesses which are not eligible for Restart Grants, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business.

The government continues to review all the economic support schemes, including grant support, as the public health response evolves.

■ Treasury: Energy and Environment Protection

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[22040\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what meetings the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury has held with external stakeholders relating to her responsibilities for energy, energy infrastructure, environment and climate policy since 1 January 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

I have had meetings with a wide variety of external stakeholders in the public and private sectors (including businesses, regulators, industry associations and academics) in order to carry out my Ministerial duties.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business such as energy, environment and climate policy are published on a quarterly basis. They are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

■ Treasury: Training

Philip Davies: [\[19541\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Written Statement of 15 December 2020, HCWS652, what steps he has taken to phase out unconscious bias training in his Department.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government does not believe that such training achieves its intended aims, and after the announcement in December, the Treasury removed all unconscious bias training and reference to it from our online learning management system. We have also stopped this being mandatory training for new starters.

WALES

■ Re-employment

Ruth Jones: [\[20527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the Acas paper, Dismissal and re-engagement (fire-and-rehire): a fact-finding exercise, published 8 June 2021.

Simon Hart:

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

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

The Acas report demonstrated that there are different views on whether the practice can ever be justified. It finds general agreement that fire and rehire should only be used in limited circumstances – such as to prevent job losses when other options have been exhausted. Acas have been asked to produce clearer and more comprehensive guidance to help employers explore all the options before considering 'fire and rehire'.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equal Pay

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[21983\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will take steps to (a) reinstate gender pay gap reporting, (b) introduce ethnicity pay gap reporting and (c) modernise equal pay laws to give women the right to know what their male counterparts earn.

Kemi Badenoch:

The legal requirement for relevant organisations to publish gender pay gap data each year, set out in the Equality Act 2010, has not changed. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has, due to the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed employers until 5 October 2021 to report their gender pay gap information for 2020/21. Extending the deadline by six months was the correct decision.

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published its independent report in March this year, which included a recommendation on ethnicity pay gap reporting. We welcome the opportunity to consider the Commission's findings on this matter, and to consider them in light of the work that has already taken place within government. As well as consulting on ethnicity pay gap reporting, we have met with businesses and representative organisations to understand the barriers towards reporting and what information should be published. We have also run a methodology testing exercise with a broad range of businesses to better understand the complexities outlined in the consultation.

We recognise the importance of transparency and awareness when it comes to ensuring equal pay. Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for an employer to stop employees from sharing information about what they earn, therefore protecting people who wish to discuss pay with their colleagues.

■ Racial Discrimination

John Howell:

[\[21855\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make an assessment of the implications for the Government's policies on racial equality of the debate on 24 June, in

the third Part-Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2021 on Combating Afrophobia in Europe.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government remains fully committed to building a fairer Britain and taking action to address disparities wherever they exist. That is why the Prime Minister established the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in July 2020.

The Commission submitted its findings to the Prime Minister on 31 March, along with 24 recommendations for key actions for the Government. We will publish our response to the report later this summer and it would be inappropriate to comment on the implications of the debate of 24 June in advance of that.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Ben Bradley:

[20497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of companies' covid-19 risk assessments including provision of covid-19 fogging equipment.

Mims Davies:

COVID-19 risk assessments fall under the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) remit. As each workplace is different, it is for an employer to identify, as part of their risk assessment, how to control COVID-19 transmission. Guidance has been produced by HSE that gives advice and information to employers on how to do such an assessment and manage the risk from COVID-19 in a proportionate manner. [Risk assessment - Working safely during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/covid19/riskassessment/)

Frequent surface cleaning is one of several control measures that can be implemented to manage the transmission risk. Fog, mist, vapour or UV (ultraviolet) treatments may be suitable options to help control the spread of coronavirus and disinfecting a larger space or room when people are not present. Any use of these treatments for these purposes should form part of your [COVID-19 risk assessment](https://www.hse.gov.uk/covid19/riskassessment/). Users must be [competent and properly trained](https://www.hse.gov.uk/covid19/riskassessment/). HSE provides guidance on its website as to when using these systems may be appropriate. Airborne disinfection does not remove the need for surface cleaning and surfaces that are dirty can reduce the effectiveness of disinfectant applied by airborne dispersion.

HSE and public health bodies in England, Wales and Scotland have agreed joint advice for dutyholders considering using walk-through spraying or misting disinfecting systems to reduce transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Spraying people with disinfectants in this way is not recommended under any circumstances (including in a tunnel, cabinet, or chamber). For further information see: [Disinfecting using fog, mist and other systems during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic - HSE news](https://www.hse.gov.uk/covid19/news/news20200624/)

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information**Cat Smith:** **[21940]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many freedom of information requests her Department has referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in each year since 2016.

Guy Opperman:

DWP has referred requests to the Cabinet Office 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>

■ Disability: Health Services**Vicky Foxcroft:** **[21290]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the final National Strategy for Disabled People will include a focus on the potential effect of backlogs in care and treatment caused by the covid-19 outbreak on the number of years people with long term conditions have had to live with a disability.

Justin Tomlinson:

The National Disability Strategy will be published in the shortly. The strategy will take into account the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people and will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects of life.

Separately, and ahead of the strategy's publication, the Department for Health and Social Care has already taken comprehensive action to address potential backlogs in care and treatment.

In April 2021, NHS staff completed 1.8m diagnostic tests and began treatment for 1.1m patients, against the backdrop of caring for 400,000 seriously ill COVID-19 patients in hospital since the pandemic began.

The 2020/21 Spending Review provided £1 billion to help tackle the elective backlog and support hospitals to cut long waits for treatment, systems are asked to deliver activity levels above set thresholds in order to access this additional funding as Elective Recovery Funding (ERF).

On 13 May 2021, NHS England launched a £160 million initiative to tackle growing waiting lists. A network of "accelerator" areas has been established to pilot new initiatives, including extra clinics at weekends, virtual assessments at home and new clinics that can complete high numbers of cataract operations.

During the pandemic, £450 million was provided to expand and upgrade A&E departments to reduce overcrowding and improve infection control so we can continue to treat both Covid and non-Covid patients safely.

■ Disability: Pay**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[20511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the disability pay gap.

Justin Tomlinson:

Pay gaps are caused by a range of factors. To address them, we must ensure that everybody has equal access to opportunities.

A range of DWP initiatives are currently supporting disabled people to stay in and enter work. These include the Work and Health Programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. The Government has also increased the number of specialist Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) in Jobcentres.

The Department has also published a voluntary reporting framework on disability, mental ill health and wellbeing, in November 2018. This is aimed at large employers (over 250 employees) and it is recommended that they publicly report on the pay and progression of disabled people at regular intervals.

■ Employment Schemes: Disability**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[20512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure economically inactive disabled people are supported to find jobs.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government is committed to improving the lives of disabled people, and will publish a National Strategy for Disabled People shortly. The Strategy will be informed by insights from the lived experience of disabled people, focusing on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life, including employment. Employment will be a central theme of the strategy.

A range of DWP initiatives are supporting disabled people to stay in and enter work. These include the Work and Health Programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. The Government has also increased the number of specialist Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) in Jobcentres.

The Department will shortly publish a Green Paper on health and disability support which will consider how we can improve our current service, provide extra support to navigate the system and seek to better understand how we can improve the current employment support offer.

■ Employment: Disability

Marsha De Cordova: [\[20509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government's national strategy for disabled people will take to prevent the further widening of the disability employment gap.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are making progress on decreasing the disability employment gap. The disability employment gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people, was 28.6 percentage points in Q1 2021. This is a decrease of 0.3 percentage points on the year, and 5.2 percentage points since Q1 2014.

The government has set a goal to see one million more disabled people in employment between 2017 and 2027 and is committed to improving the lives of disabled people. The National Strategy for Disabled People will be published shortly and will be informed by insights from the lived experience of disabled people, focusing on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life. Employment will be a central theme of the strategy. The strategy's significance is even greater, as we rebuild the UK's economy and society in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Job Creation

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[21984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish data by sex, ethnicity and disability on the number of jobs created by the Government's job creation schemes.

Mims Davies:

For information regarding the gender and the disability status of those who have begun Kickstart placements I refer the honourable member to PQ [16981](#) and PQ [6283](#).

The Department for Work and Pensions will be monitoring and evaluating the Kickstart Scheme throughout and after its implementation. We will gather data on the ethnicity of Kickstart participants through the planned Kickstart participant survey and using information recorded on UC systems. We will publish the findings of the evaluation once complete.

■ Members: Correspondence

David Linden: [\[22005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the letter of 19 April 2021 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East on care leavers.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has no record of receiving this correspondence, we will engage with the Hon Members office to discuss it.

■ Natural Gas: Hydrogen

Alan Brown:

[\[21959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to amend the Gas Safety Management Regulations to allow hydrogen blending within the main grid to levels higher than 0.1 per cent by volume; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) review of the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (GSMR) is ongoing. The review is considering potential changes in gas quality, and policy options to enable future changes to the gas quality specification (currently set out in Schedule 3 of GSMR) to be made in an efficient way. This will enable safe hydrogen blending and wider safe use of hydrogen in place of natural gas. Following completion of the review, any proposals for change and associated policy options HSE puts forward will be considered.

■ Pension Credit

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[21924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England (i) receive the basic state pension, (ii) receive pension credit and (iii) are eligible for pension credit but do not claim it; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that all pensioners receive their full entitlement to pension credit.

Guy Opperman:

The Government wants to make sure that all eligible pensioners claim the Pension Credit to which they are rightly entitled. DWP continues to use multiple ways to reach those who can claim. Amongst other things, on 16 June, DWP joined forces with Age UK, Len Goodman, Rustie Lee and the BBC to help reach those who may be reticent about claiming Pension Credit. The aim was to renew our efforts to raise awareness of Pension Credit, encouraging people to check their eligibility and make a claim.

On 17 May, DWP Ministers hosted a roundtable event attended by a range of stakeholders who have an interest in pensioners' financial wellbeing, to explore opportunities on getting information about Pension Credit to pensioners and their family members.

We have recently updated our online toolkit which provides a range of ideas and support which stakeholders can use with their customers to encourage take-up of Pension Credit. Two new videos specifically target key messages aimed at pensioners as well as their family members and friends.

Our Pension Credit pages on gov.uk have recently been updated, drawing attention to how Pension Credit can provide extra money as well as a range of other help for pensioners who get it. The online claim facility we introduced last year, further enables family, friends and organisations to help pensioners make a claim.

This year, over 11 million pensioners in Great Britain received messaging about Pension Credit with their annual State Pension up-rating letter which also highlighted that an award of Pension Credit can mean being eligible for other benefits such as Housing Benefit or a free over-75 TV licence.

The number of pensioners in receipt of the basic State Pension, as well as the number of pensioners in receipt of Pension Credit, by Parliamentary Constituency, is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Pensioners: Poverty

Colleen Fletcher: **[21926]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of trends in the levels of pensioner poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last 10 years; and what steps her Department is taking to eradicate pensioner poverty in those areas.

Guy Opperman:

Since 2010, the Government has increased the full yearly value of the basic State Pension by over £2,050 in cash terms. The full basic State Pension in 2010 was £97.65 per week and is now £137.60 per week.

There are now 200,000 fewer pensioners in absolute poverty (both before and after housing costs) than in 2009/10.

The Government is committed to action that helps to alleviate levels of pensioner poverty. For current pensioners, this includes the Triple Lock, the new State Pension and Pension Credit. For future pensioners, it also includes auto-enrolment into workplace pensions, which has transformed pension saving for millions of workers; and our 50 plus: choices agenda which aims to maximise the labour market opportunities for people to earn and save for longer.

Estimates for pensioner poverty for towns and constituencies are not possible.

The most recent estimates for England are here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>

■ Redundancy: Coronavirus

Sir David Evennett: **[21830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the support available to people who have been made redundant as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

The Rapid Response Service (RRS) is all about working in partnerships to address the effects of job losses on individuals and on the local community. Our aim is to work with employers to deliver flexible, timely, and appropriate support for them and their employees and help individuals secure a job or move into self-employment quickly and ideally without the need to claim welfare benefits.

RRS is available to private and public employers. Third sector employers are also eligible where the job losses affect paid workers. RRS support can start when people are under threat of redundancy or during the period of notice.

Where individuals have not found alternative work before they lose their job, RRS support can continue for a further 13 weeks whether they make a claim for benefits or not.

This is in addition to the ongoing support provided by DWP for claimants moving them forward in their journey closer to/back into employment.

We continually review this support to ensure it meets the needs of those people who access this type of support.

■ Universal Credit: EU Nationals**Patricia Gibson:**[\[21935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has provided the Home Office on the continued payment of universal credit to people who are (a) awaiting a decision about their EU Settled Status application or (b) appealing a rejection of their EU Settled Status application.

Justin Tomlinson:

The department has not shared any guidance with the Home Office on the continued payment of Universal Credit (UC) to people (a) awaiting a decision on their EU Settled Status Application or (b) appealing a rejection of their EU Settled Status application.

I refer the honourable member of North Ayrshire and Arran to my previous response on this subject: [UIN 19715](#)

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Palestinians: Textbooks**

Lee Anderson:

[\[17844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the European Commission on the publication date of the EU-funded review of the content of Palestinian Authority school textbooks.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 24 June 2021. The correct answer should have been:

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 UK engaged closely with our European partners to urge publication. The review is publicly accessible on their website: www.gei.de/en/departments/knowledge-in-transition/analysis-of-palestinian-textbooks-paltex.html

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Designated Settings Indemnity Support September extension

Minister of State for Care (Helen Whately):

[\[HCWS130\]](#)

Further to my written statement on 25 March 2021, I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable members to bring to their attention the undertaking of a contingent liability. This relates to an extension of the Designated Settings Indemnity Support (DSIS), which offers targeted and time-limited state-backed indemnity arrangements to care homes registered, or intending to register, as “Designated Settings”, and which are unable to obtain sufficient insurance cover.

On 18 January 2021, the Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment announced in a Written Ministerial Statement, and accompanying Departmental Minute, provision of these temporary indemnity arrangements under the DSIS. The DSIS includes cover for clinical negligence, employer’s and public liability where a care provider seeking to become a Designated Setting is unable to secure sufficient commercial insurance, or where an existing provider has been operating without sufficient cover. Employer’s and public liability is covered under the new Coronavirus Temporary Indemnity Scheme; clinical negligence is covered by the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts. The DSIS is supervised by DHSC and administered by NHS Resolution, and to date, has proved to be an effective package of support to Designated Settings.

DSIS initially provided cover for Designated Settings until the end of March 2021 and was subsequently extended for a further three months until the end of June 2021. Following a further review of DSIS, it will now be extended until 30 September 2021, in order to maintain the current level of support for these vital settings. This extension will benefit current DSIS participants, as well any additional settings who may wish to apply for the support and who meet the criteria for inclusion. We will review the progress of the support ahead of this end-date.

I regret that in this circumstance, due to the need to ensure that there are no gaps in DSIS cover after the current 30 June end-date, the normal 14 sitting days for consideration has not been possible. A Departmental Minute will be laid in the House of Commons providing more detail on this contingent liability.

TRANSPORT

■ European Motor Insurance Directive (Removal of Vnuk from UK law)

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS131\]](#)

On 21 February 2021, the Government announced it intended to remove the effects of the 2014 European Court of Justice’s ruling in the Vnuk case from GB law. The Government has been clear since the ruling in 2014 that it does not agree with it. The

decision directed the unnecessary extension of the provisions requiring motor insurance to private land as well as a greater range of vehicles that potentially includes motorsports, agricultural machinery and light electric vehicles. This has led to excessive liabilities on the insurance industry, and to potential increases in motorist's insurance premiums. Delivering on this commitment is a priority for the Government and we will continue to explore bringing forward the necessary legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows. The Hon. Member for Wellingborough has introduced a private member's bill entitled 'Motor Vehicles (Compulsory Insurance)' which aims to deliver the necessary legislative change. The Government will follow passage of this bill with interest.

Background

- Vnuk is a 2014 European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling on the case of a Slovenian farmer - Mr Vnuk - who was knocked off his ladder by a reversing tractor trailer on a private farm in 2007.
- The ruling directed that the compulsory motor insurance requirement must be extended to include vehicles being used on private land, as well as a greater range of vehicles - potentially including those used in motorsports, agricultural machinery and light electric vehicles (LEV).
- This contrasts sharply with the scope of the domestic compulsory insurance requirement (in GB) under the Road Traffic Act 1988 (RTA) which is limited to accidents on roads and other public places and has a narrower definition of "motor vehicle".
- Implementing Vnuk would have been costly, in the region of £2 billion (covering existing motorcars, existing motorcycles, existing business vehicles, motor sports and other business) according to the Government Actuary's Department (GAD).
- Focusing just on existing motorcars, GAD calculate that insurance policyholders could face an estimated additional cost of £1.227 billion if Vnuk was implemented – expressed as a potential increase in individual insurance premiums of c.£50 for 25 million consumers.
- In order to remove the impact of the Vnuk decision from GB law, primary legislation is required and a slot to introduce this will be sought at the earliest possible opportunity

■ **HS2 Update**

Minister of State for Transport (Andrew Stephenson):

[\[HCWS132\]](#)

I am today, 29 June 2021, publishing a Government response report as required under section 60(3) of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Act 2021. The report sets out the Government response to the issues raised in the HS2 Phase 2a local consultation held between 1 February and 26 February 2021 and which were summarised in the consultation report published on the 13 May 2021 and prepared by the independent research company, Ipsos MORI.

I am placing copies of the report in the libraries of both Houses.