



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:33 P.M., 02 July 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Boilers: Repairs and Maintenance****Steve Double:**[\[21265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the average number of gas boilers that were replaced in UK domestic properties in each of the last five years.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

According to the Hot Water Heating and Industry Council (HHIC), 1.67 million boilers were sold in 2019. HHIC have also recently announced that the 12-month rolling average sales figure for boilers had increased by 14% from April 2020 to April 2021, demonstrating a strong response to the impacts of Covid-19 last year.

The majority of boiler purchases are replacements, installed into existing dwellings, with the rest being installed within new build properties.

For previous years, data on annual boiler sales is available under licence from market intelligence sources.

■ **Bounce Back Loan Scheme****Seema Malhotra:**[\[21919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Bounce Back Loans businesses have taken up, by business size and what the value is of those loans, by business size.

**Paul Scully:**

A breakdown on the number of loans offered through the Bounce Back Loan Scheme as of 21 June 2021 is in the table below.

BUSINESS SIZE	VALUE (£)	NO. OF FACILITIES
Micro	39,737,670,885	1,395,991
Small	6,823,645,704	140,954
Medium	138,154,304	3,245
Mid- Sized	147,613,609	3,429
Large	7,492,775	176
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,854,577,277</b>	<b>1,543,795</b>

The categories are based on turnover and breakdown as follows:

Micro: Turnover > £632k;

Small: Turnover between £632K and £10.19 million;

Medium: Turnover between £10.2 million and £24.9 million;

Mid-Sized: Turnover between £25 million and £500 million;

Large: Turnover > £500 million.

## ■ Business: Newcastle upon Tyne Central

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[21215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a list of the companies that have been in receipt of payments from the (a) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and (b) Bounce Back Loan Scheme in Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency to date; and how much was received by each such business.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department is unable to provide a detailed breakdown of loan recipients under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) or the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILs) as this information is commercially sensitive for borrowers.

Details of facilities made available under the schemes have been published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module at the following website: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/competition/transparency/public?lang=en>.

However this data will only show the region where the business is located. Further information on data reporting can be found on the British Business Bank's website: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-schemes/data-reporting/>.

As of 7 June 2021, the total number of loans taken up under the schemes by businesses in Newcastle Upon Tyne Central is as follows:

SCHEME	NUMBER OF LOANS	VALUE	MEDIAN VALUE
BBLS	2627	£ 81,511,198	£ 30,000
CBILS	135	£ 47,062,585	£ 150,000

## ■ Electricity: Storage

**Alan Brown:**

[\[21958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, what his timeframe is for bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the Electricity Act 1989 to define electricity storage as a distinct subset of generation.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

In our 2017 Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan and in the 2020 Energy White Paper, the Government committed to amend the Electricity Act 1989 to define electricity storage as a distinct subset of generation. This will be important to improve regulatory clarity for electricity storage, and is a commitment we will honour when parliamentary time allows.

**■ Employment: Environment Protection****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[22029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he (a) has had and (b) is planning to have with Ministerial colleagues in the (i) Department for Education and (ii) Department for Work and Pensions to support people with skills and training for employment in the green economy in (A) Leicestershire and (B) the UK.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Climate Action Strategy Committee, chaired by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister, and the Climate Action Implementation Committee provide two important ministerial forums for discussion on climate, including skills and training for the green economy.

We are determined to seize the once-in-a-generation economic opportunities of the net zero transition by creating new business opportunities and, by one estimate, supporting up to 2 million green jobs by 2030 across all regions of the UK. For example, the policies set out in the Ten Point Plan, support 90,000 green collar jobs across the UK by 2024, and up to 250,000 by 2030.

In order to ensure we have the skilled workforce to deliver net zero and our Ten Point Plan, my Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills and I convened the Green Jobs Taskforce, to help us develop plans for new long-term good quality, green jobs by 2030 and advise what support is needed for people in transitioning industries. The Taskforce is currently preparing its report and independent recommendations for the Government, industry and the skills sector, which will feed into the development of our Net Zero Strategy to be published later in the year.

In Leicester and the surrounding area, Leicester and Leicestershire's Growth Hub (Biz Gateway) is working to support businesses to become greener through workshops, including sustainable packaging, renewable energy and behavioural change. For instance, green recovery is one of four key priorities running through the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Skills Report.

## ■ EU Grants and Loans: East Ayrshire

**Alan Brown:** [\[21949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the level of EU structural funding allocated to East Ayrshire since 2010.

**Paul Scully:**

The management of European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF) in Scotland is a devolved matter and therefore the responsibility of the Scottish Government.

## ■ Future Fund

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[21913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) value of applications for Future Fund convertible loans received by business size.

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[21914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) value of applications for Future Fund convertible loans received by region.

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[21915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) value of convertible loans approved by business size.

**Paul Scully:**

A total of 1,190 convertible loans have been issued to companies through the Future Fund, which is administered by the British Business Bank. The value of these loans at the time of issue was £1,136 million. An update on the Future Fund, including information on participating companies, will be published in due course.

## ■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[21213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the Government's Net-Zero strategy.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

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

## ■ Heating and Water Supply

**Steve Double:**

[\[21264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the number of properties that have sufficient space available for the installation of a water tank in addition to fitting a new heating system.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We do not currently hold data on how many homes have sufficient space available for the installation of a water tank in addition to fitting a new heating system. However, the English Housing Survey suggests the proportion of dwellings that have central heating and a separate hot water cylinder has decreased from half of the stock in 2008 to just over a third in 2018. This suggests a general attrition in the space provision for separate hot water cylinders.

As low carbon heating systems generally require a separate hot water tank, we are exploring this further through projects like the Government-funded Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project and working with industry to develop solutions to internal space constraints, such as providing innovation funding to support the commercialisation of technologies like thermal phase change batteries, which occupy a third of the space of a traditional hot water cylinder for the same hot water output.

## ■ Heating: Business Premises and Housing

**Steve Double:**

[\[21262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the number of homes and businesses (a) on and (b) off the gas grid in the UK which will need to replace or upgrade their heating system to work with a heat pump.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Earlier this year, the Department published a report on heat distribution systems in domestic buildings. This report suggests that up to 90 per cent of dwellings in the UK with an existing wet central heating system may need to replace or upgrade their heating system to meet peak winter heating demand with a low temperature heat pump, falling to 68 per cent when using a high temperature heat pump.

This research does not distinguish between homes on and off the gas grid, and does not consider non-domestic buildings. For non-domestic buildings, we intend to explore the suitability of existing heat distribution systems for low temperature operation as part of our forthcoming Non-Domestic Building Survey.



## ■ Heating: Costs

**Steve Double:**

[\[21263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the average cost of fitting a new heating system to a typical UK property to make it compatible with a heat pump.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Earlier this year, the Department published a report on heat distribution systems. This report concluded that the typical cost of retrofitting an entire house with larger radiators for a low temperature heating system, like a low temperature heat pump, would be approximately £1,700 for a one- to two-bedroom house, £2,200 for a three-bedroom house and £2,900 for a five-bedroom house. However, not all homes will require a radiator retrofit to become suitable for a heat pump, meaning the costs would be lower. In addition, the use of high temperature heat pumps is likely to significantly reduce the need to alter existing heat distribution systems.

## ■ Hinkley Point B Power Station

**Alan Brown:**

[\[21951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the planned shutdown date for Hinkley Point (B) nuclear power station; what estimate his Department has made of the average electricity generation capacity of that power station; and what plans his Department has to replace that capacity.

**Alan Brown:**

[\[21952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the planned shutdown date for Hartlepool nuclear power station; what estimate his Department has made of the average electricity generation capacity of that power station; and what plans his Department has to replace that capacity.

**Alan Brown:**

[\[21953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the planned shutdown date for Heysham nuclear power station; what estimate his Department has made of the average electricity generation capacity of that power station; and what plans his Department has to replace that capacity.

**Alan Brown:**

[\[21954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the planned shutdown date for Dungeness (B) nuclear power station; what estimate his Department has made of the average electricity generation capacity of that power station; and what plans his Department has to replace that capacity.

**Alan Brown:** [\[21955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the planned shutdown date for Torness nuclear power station; what estimate his Department has made of the average electricity generation capacity of that power station; and what plans his Department has to replace that capacity.

**Alan Brown:** [\[21956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the planned shutdown date for Heysham II nuclear power station; what estimate his Department has made of the average the electricity generation capacity of that power station; and what plans his Department has to replace that capacity.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The decision to close a nuclear power station is a matter for the operator and the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

EDF Energy's published closure dates and the generating capacity for power stations is set out in the following table.

<b>POWER STATION</b>	<b>EDF ENERGY'S PUBLISHED CLOSURE DATE</b>	<b>GENERATING CAPACITY</b>
Dungeness B	June 2021	No longer generating
Hinkley Point B	July 2022	965 MW
Hartlepool	2024	1,185 MW
Heysham 1	2024	1,060 MW
Torness	2030	1,200 MW
Heysham 2	2030	1,240 MW

The Government confirmed in the Energy White Paper that it aims to bring at least one large-scale nuclear project beyond Hinkley Point C to a Final Investment Decision by the end of this Parliament (subject to clear value-for-money and all relevant approvals), and that it will provide up to £385m in an Advanced Nuclear Fund (subject to future Spending Reviews) for the next generation of nuclear technology aiming, by the early 2030s, to develop a Small Modular Reactor design and to build an Advanced Modular Reactor demonstrator.

The Capacity Market ensures security of electricity supply by providing all forms of capacity the right incentives to be on the system and to deliver electricity when needed. It secures the capacity we need, including new capacity to replace aging power stations as they retire, through auctions held four-and one-year ahead of

delivery (T-4 and T-1). The Capacity Market has brought forward over 13 GW of new build generation and interconnectors to date.

#### ■ **Hinkley Point C Power Station**

**Alan Brown:**

[\[21957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his recent estimate is of the commissioning date for Hinkley Point C (a) Unit 1 and (b) Unit 2.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

EDF is the lead investor in Hinkley Point C. The schedule for the construction of Hinkley Point C is the responsibility of the developer and its investors, and not the Government. On 27 January 2021, EDF published a notice saying that Unit 1 is expected to start generating electricity in June 2026. We understand that the developer is currently managing the schedule for the construction of Unit 2 to follow approximately one year behind that of Unit 1.

#### ■ **Local Enterprise Partnerships: Economic Growth**

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[21916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a statement on the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships in the Plan for Growth.

**Paul Scully:**

We are determined to ensure that businesses continue to have clear representation and support as we drive the recovery and build back better. We are working with LEPs and others to review their future role as we set out at the Budget and will be saying more on our plans as soon as possible.

#### ■ **Royal Mail: Delivery Services**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[21226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of Royal Mail on the Royal Mail's new parcel plan for deliveries.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department has regular discussions with Royal Mail on a range of issues.

The Government has no role in Royal Mail's operational or business decisions which are a matter for the company's management.

#### ■ **Shipping: China**

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[21351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to reports of major bottlenecks in the global container shipping industry, what plans he has to tackle the rising costs of shipping from China.

**Paul Scully:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the reply given by my Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for International Trade on 29 June 2021 to Question UIN [20498](#).

**■ Small Businesses: Advisory Services****Seema Malhotra:** [\[21917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many small business leaders have been trained under the Small Business Leadership Programme.

**Paul Scully:**

2,150 small business leaders completed the Small Business Leadership Programme, exceeding the target of 2,000 participants.

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[21918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many business owners have participated in the Peer Networks Programme.

**Paul Scully:**

4,462 people participated in year 1 (between October 2020 - March 2021) of the Peer Networks Programme.

**■ Small Businesses: Enfield North****Feryal Clark:** [\[21355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to ensure adequate funding is available to small and medium sized enterprises in Enfield North constituency to support their economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

SMEs remain the backbone of our economy, and though this has been such a challenging period, we have seen many businesses find creative ways to innovate, adapt and plan for the future. During the Covid-19 outbreak, the Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support for businesses, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, a range of Government-guaranteed business loans, and a significant package of direct business grants totalling £25 billion.

The Government is committed to supporting SMEs as they reopen, as Covid restrictions are lifted. The Budget 2021 announced a £520m investment over three years to create Help to Grow: Digital (100,000 SMEs – launching in autumn) and Help to Grow: Management (30,000 SMEs – launching in summer), to boost productivity of SMEs across the UK through software adoption and leadership and management training. This will help drive growth by helping SMEs to learn new skills, reach new customers and boost profits.

'Help to Grow: Management' will lay the foundations for recovery by providing SMEs with key skills in financial management, marketing, innovation, and supporting them to develop and adapt their business strategies. 'Help to Grow: Digital' will help businesses adopt technology to operate in an increasingly digital market and reach their customers online. This is in addition to the Peer Networks programme, now in its second year, supporting 6,000 small business leaders to develop skills such as leadership, management and technology adoption with the support of their peers.

Businesses which are unable to access business support or are unsure of the support available should contact their nearest Government-backed Growth Hub, where business advisers will be able to highlight potential sources of finance and clarify grants available. All contact details are available online at: [www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/](http://www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/). All Government support for businesses affected by coronavirus, is detailed online here: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support).

#### ■ **Small Businesses: Females**

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[21920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the total GVA contributed by majority women-led SMEs to the UK economy in each year since 2014.

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[21921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the total GVA contributed by SMEs led by people from minority ethnic backgrounds in each year since 2014.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) does not assess the total GVA contributed by people from women led or minority ethnic group-led SMEs to the UK economy on an annual basis as this could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

BEIS monitors the number and proportion of majority women-led SMEs and minority ethnic group-led SMEs in the UK in the annual Longitudinal Small Business Survey, however the survey does not include information on the GVA contributed by these firms.

Total turnover of SMEs is published in BEIS's annual Business Population Estimates for the UK, however data on turnover by majority women-led SMEs and minority ethnic group-led SMEs is not available.

It was estimated by BIS in 2015 that in the UK, women-led SMEs contribute about £85 billion to economic output and minority ethnic group-led SMEs contribute about £30 billion<sup>[1]</sup>.

*[1] BIS, Contribution of women-led and MEG-led businesses to the UK non-financial economy, 2015, pg. 3.*

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **11 Downing Street: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Cat Smith:** [\[21942\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many meetings have taken place on the most recent refurbishment and renovation of the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street; and when did these meetings take place.

**Julia Lopez:**

Details of official Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

More generally, I refer the hon. Member to the answer by my noble friend, Lord True (Minister of State at the Cabinet Office), to [PQHL14191](#) on 23 April 2021.

■ **Arts and Design: Employment**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[21825\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what data his Department holds on the number of people who are employed to work in the arts and design sector.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSAs response to PQ21825 [UKSA's final response to PQ21825.pdf]

■ **World War II: Channel Islands**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[21838\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the UK holds classified documents that relate to the Nazi occupation of the Channel Islands during the Second World War.

**Julia Lopez:**

Government records from this period will have been transferred (subject to any legal exemptions) to The National Archives under the Public Records Act and will be listed on their catalogue which is available online.

**DEFENCE**■ **Armed Forces: Coronavirus**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[21908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps is he taking to ensure that all armed forces personnel are fully covid-19 vaccinated.

**James Heappey:**

Armed Forces personnel will receive their vaccination in line with the national programme as set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

For those on active operations overseas, 95% of eligible personnel have received a first dose, and 61% their second.

All eligible personnel, at home or abroad, will have been offered at least their first vaccine dose by 19 July, in line with the national programme. As the vaccination programme in the UK accelerates, we are working to ensure that no Service personnel are disadvantaged by their service overseas.

**■ AWE: Expenditure****Deidre Brock:**[\[21927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has paid to AWE Management Ltd under the Atomic Weapons Establishment management and operation contract in each year since 2000.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The following table shows the costs of AWE ML under the Management and Operations contract for each financial year since 2000-01, at outturn prices.

Financial Year £ million

2000-01 275

2001-02 264

2002-03 258

2003-04 286

2004-05 354

2005-06 493

2006-07 687

2007-08 894

2008-09 800

2009-10 870

2010-11 944

2011-12 941

2012-13 830

2013-14 901

2014-15 921

2015-16 887

2016-17 815

2017-18 867

2018-19 901

2019-20 994

In the preparation of this response for the hon. Member it came to light that in response to two previous PQs (on 22 November 2018 and 3 February 2015, Questions 194785 and 222312) the amount stated as paid to AWE ML was erroneously overstated in respect of the financial years 2012-13 to 2017-18.

## ■ LE TacCIS Programme

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his timetable is for the delivery Morpheus Evolve to Open.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The MORPHEUS Evolve to Open (EvO) Transition Partner contract (placed with General Dynamics Mission Systems UK (GDMS(UK)) in 2017) aims to deliver the foundation of the agreed MoD digital communications strategy. The objective is to deliver the evolution of the closed, proprietary, in service Tactical Communications and Information System (CIS) system (BCIP 5.6) to open design standards. The principle is that this will end vendor lock-in, and drive value through commercial competition for tactical communications solutions in the future.

The EvO Transition Partner contract was due to be completed, with objectives delivered, in April 2021, this has not been achieved.

Consideration is being made on the best route to achieve our objectives. GDMS(UK) have had their contract extended (at no additional cost) under an interim agreement until September 2021, this is in order to facilitate negotiations with GDMS (UK) on how our objectives could be fulfilled through them to form part of that overall assessment.

## ■ LE TacCIS Programme: Contracts

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the status is of contracts awarded for the Joint Common Remote Viewing Terminal.

**Jeremy Quin:**

When the initial four year contract period was due to end (October 2020), an initial option to extend the contract with L3Harris to 2023 to continue to provide essential technical support was enacted. Subsequently, supply and repair activity migrated to the recently competed LE TacCIS Logistic Support Contract won by Babcock International Group. There is an option available within the initial (L3Harris) contract to further extend to October 2026 if required.



**■ Military Aid: Coronavirus**

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[24304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association's survey, published on 21 June 2021, that reported on the levels of public awareness of the contribution of the armed forces to the covid-19 vaccination programme in the UK.

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[24305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to help improve public understanding of the role that the armed forces have played in tackling the covid-19 outbreak in the UK.

**James Heappey:**

The Directorate of Defence Communications (DDC), with support from the single services, has communicated the role of the Armed Forces in the response to the pandemic consistently in 2020-2021, releasing regular imagery, videos and press releases and facilitating interviews with numerous members of the COVID Support Force.

Coverage of support has featured in national and regional media, including all national broadcasters and in print. DDC has produced webpages to keep the media and public informed of the support being providing through the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process as below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-support-force-the-mods-contribution-to-the-coronavirus-response>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-support-force-the-mods-continued-contribution-to-the-coronavirus-response>

<https://medium.com/voices-of-the-armed-forces/tagged/covid19>

DDC also monitors public attitudes towards a range of Defence activity, including COVID response, to ensure effectiveness of our communications work.

In Quarter 1 of 2021 79% of respondents supported (strongly support or tend to support) British Military involvement as part of the UK's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, 76% of respondents felt fairly or very reassured by the idea of British Military involvement as part of the UK's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministry of Defence will continue to communicate the support provided to the UK's Covid response.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **Broadband****Dr Kieran Mullan:****[21369]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on the rollout of gigabit broadband.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible. Today, over two in five premises can access gigabit-capable networks, up from just one in ten in November 2019. By the end of the year, 60% will have access, and by 2025 the Government is targeting a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage, working with industry to reach as close to 100% as possible.

To achieve this, the Government has enacted a number of policies to make it easier to deploy broadband networks in the UK. These include addressing the issue of unresponsive landlords holding up deployment through the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Act and launching the Street Manager service with the Department for Transport to make it easier for operators to access roads for digital infrastructure deployment.

The Government is also investing £5bn as part of Project Gigabit to ensure the hardest-to-reach areas in the UK receive coverage. The first Project Gigabit areas are set to reach some one million hard to reach homes and businesses, with Phase 1a covering up to 510,000 premises, announced in March 2021. Phase 1b is expected to be confirmed in the summer and reach up to 640,000 more hard to reach homes and businesses. These are areas with a high percentage of hard to reach premises and a relatively high proportion of premises without access to superfast speeds.

Project Gigabit was designed to be flexible as it runs alongside commercial rollout. As with other market data, we will review intervention areas to ensure we target truly left-behind places. The next Project Gigabit Delivery Plan update is expected shortly.

Concurrently, premises in rural areas may also be in line for funding through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, with up to £210m allocated to the scheme over the next four years to support hard to reach communities. Cheshire East has made good use of the scheme, seeing 338 voucher connections worth £772,487, with a further 308 vouchers to be connected, totalling £1.4 million.

Home and business owners can check the eligibility of their address and then look up suppliers in their area by going to <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>. The voucher

scheme offers up to £1,500 for homes and £3,500 for businesses to help to cover the costs of installing gigabit broadband to people's doorsteps when used as part of a group scheme.

Additionally, 4,000 premises in Cheshire will also benefit from access to gigabit capable broadband as a result of a £4.5million investment under the Superfast Broadband programme that was agreed in December 2020.

## ■ Social Media

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[23341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether it is his policy to require all user generated content on social media that has been filtered or altered to be identifiable as such.

**Caroline Dinenege:**

The government does not require all filtered or altered content to be identifiable as such on social media.

However, the Online Safety Bill will impose new duties on social media companies to address the harm that may be caused by user-generated content, including altered or filtered content, on their services. These duties will apply to illegal content and other content that may have a serious adverse physical or psychological impact on children and, in the case of the largest social media companies, on adults.

The Government has committed to publishing the Online Media Literacy Strategy which will complement the regulatory regime to support online safety. The Strategy will empower users with the skills and knowledge they need to make safer and more informed decisions online. This will include promoting critical thinking skills, and understanding that the online environment is not always reflective of reality.

## ■ Surveillance: EU Law

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[23389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the Government's response to the European Parliament's resolution on the compatibility of the UK's use of mass surveillance powers with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The European Union adopted adequacy decisions on 28 June 2021, confirming its independent assessment of the United Kingdom's high data protection standards.

European Union adequacy decisions are adopted through a unilateral process controlled and managed by the European Commission. It is for the European Commission to decide how it responds to the European Parliament's non-binding resolution on the matter.

United Kingdom intelligence agencies and law enforcement bodies neither conduct, nor seek to conduct, mass surveillance. We have discussed this issue in detail with the European Commission and they have rightly concluded that the UK's national security framework meets the European Union's adequacy test.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Arts and Design: Higher Education

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[21813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an estimate of the projected number of educators teaching arts and design courses employed in the Higher Education sector in the next five years.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[21814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of his Department's budget is spent on supporting the arts and design sector.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[21815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an estimate of the potential impact of the planned reduction in funding for arts and design courses on student intake numbers for those courses in the Higher Education sector in the next five years.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[21816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of increased funding for arts and design in the Higher Education sector.

**Michelle Donelan:**

This government values and supports the arts throughout the education system. For example, we have invested over £620 million from 2016-21 in a diverse portfolio of arts and music education programmes to ensure all children, whatever their background, have access to a high-quality education in arts and music.

This government also supports substantial provision for creative arts in the higher education sector. In 2020-21, £690 million of Strategic Priorities Grant funding (then referred to as the Teaching Grant) was provided, via the Office for Students (OfS), for high-cost subject funding which includes art and design courses. A further £43 million of Strategic Priorities Grant funding was provided to specialist providers including top music and arts institutions. Further information on provider-level allocations can be

found within the OfS's guide to funding for 2020-21, available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guide-to-funding-2020-21/> and <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/funding-for-providers/annual-funding/technical-guidance-and-funding-data/> in the document '2020-21 Sector tables (October 2020)'.

The government has asked the OfS to reform the Strategic Priorities Grant for 2021-22. These reforms include the reallocation of high-cost subject funding towards the provision of high-cost subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost science, technology and engineering subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs. We have considered the impact of the reforms, which can be found in the annex in the guidance letter, sent by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, to the OfS on 19 January. The OfS had also published their modelling of impacts alongside their recent consultation document on 2021-22 funding.

One of our proposals is for a 50% reduction in the rate of high-cost subject funding, which is one element of the wider Strategic Priorities Grant, for some subjects in order to enable this reprioritisation. It is important to note that the Strategic Priorities Grant accounts for a relatively small proportion of the total income of higher education providers today. For the providers losing funding due to this reallocation, the income lost would account for approximately 0.05% of their estimated total income, based on the latest data available.

As part of the same reform programme, we have asked the OfS to invest an additional £10 million in our world-leading specialist providers, many of which specialise in arts provision. We want to ensure that our specialist providers receive additional support, and that grant funding is used to effectively support students.

The OfS have publicly consulted on these proposals, and responses from universities, students and others will be taken into account before any final decisions on 2021-22 allocations are made. Decisions on future funding will be made in light of the Spending Review.

Higher education providers are autonomous bodies, independent from government. As such, they are responsible for their own admissions decisions. They are also responsible for their own decisions on staffing. They should make these decisions according to their own operational needs and the needs of their wider staff and student community.

#### ■ Arts: GCSE

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[21817]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the proportion of students opting to study (a) drama, (b) art, (c) music and (d) performing arts GCSEs at secondary school.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[21818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the availability of (a) drama, (b) art, (c) music and (d) performing arts GCSEs for secondary school students throughout the country.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is committed to high quality education for all pupils including in the arts. Art & design and music are included in the National Curriculum and remain compulsory in all maintained schools from the age of 5 to 14. Requirements relating to drama are set out within the English curriculum, where all pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Post-14, all pupils in maintained schools must be offered the opportunity to study at least one subject in the arts. All state funded schools must teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and this includes promoting the cultural development of their pupils.

The Department has provided over £620 million of funding between 2016 and 2021 on a diverse range of music and arts education programmes. This includes the Model Music Curriculum which supports teachers in delivering high quality music education. We have committed £79 million in the 2021/22 financial year for Music Education Hubs which provide pupils with instruments to play in class, and £1 million for charities which teach pupils about different styles of music and the Department continues to fund a diverse range of cultural education programmes.

Since 2010, the proportion of pupils in state funded schools taking at least one arts subject has fluctuated across years but remained broadly stable.

## ■ Arts: Secondary Education

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[21819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage secondary school students to pursue careers in the creative arts sector.

**Nick Gibb:**

The National Careers Service provides independent, impartial, professional advice on careers, skills and the labour market. This includes around 800 job profiles, including roles in the creative arts sector, that tell users what different careers entail and the different routes to enter those careers. In addition, the Careers & Enterprise Company is ensuring that every young person has access to work placements, work experience and other employer-based activities.

The Government is committed to high quality education for all pupils, including in the arts, and this supports pupils' choices in terms of further study and careers. Schools are required to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and this includes promoting pupils' cultural development. The Department has spent over £620 million between 2016 and 2021 on a range of cultural education programmes, which we continue to fund this year. This includes the Model Music Curriculum which supports teachers in delivering high quality music education.

The Department's programmes support curricular and extra-curricular arts and music education and most have a focus on enabling access and participation in the arts for disadvantaged pupils. For example, this can be achieved through opportunity areas as well as through the pupil premium targeted at disadvantaged pupils across the country. The Government's flagship Music and Dance Scheme and Dance and Drama Awards also help to ensure that talented musicians and performers can access the world-class training they need to succeed in acting and dance careers, irrespective of background.

Finally, the Department works closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) to support careers in the creative arts. As part of the Creative Industries Sector Deal, DCMS committed £2 million to the Creative Careers Programme in partnership with industry, designed to inspire young people from across the UK to be taught about the range of career opportunities available to them in our world-leading creative industries. Activity is targeted at schools in Opportunity Areas and has reached over 115,000 students at 1,500 state schools across England to date. These schools have also been supported to meet Gatsby benchmarks, enabling them to provide their pupils with high quality careers information, advice and guidance.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

**Catherine West:**

**[21312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies on the effectiveness of whole class covid-19 quarantine.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department regularly considers advice from a number of different sources, including the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), Public Health England (PHE), and the Joint Biosecurity Centre to ensure policies are guided by the most up to date scientific evidence.

The scientific evidence papers from SAGE meetings are published in tranches and are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The Children's Task and Finish Working Group, established by SAGE, provides consolidated scientific health advice to the Government. Advice from this group is used by the Department to understand the impacts of infection control measures in schools.

Alongside the March 2021 announcement of the full return to school, the Department published the following evidence summary:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963639/DfE\\_Evidence\\_summary\\_COVID-19\\_-\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_education\\_settings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf).

The decision on the length of time required for self-isolation following identification of a positive case is based on the latest public health advice received from PHE. Policy is subject to continuous review, and the Department will continue to work with colleagues in PHE and other relevant bodies to determine whether any changes to self-isolation policy are appropriate as soon as the public health advice allows.

An ongoing study led by PHE and NHS Test and Trace will help increase understanding of how effective daily contact testing could be for people who are contacts of positive COVID-19 cases. It could be used as an alternative to self-isolation.

### ■ Education: Disadvantaged

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[21975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to target resources at tackling the attainment gap to help ensure that children and young people progress their learning.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is aware that the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak has been felt most significantly by disadvantaged children and young people. We have already announced over £3 billion to support Education Recovery, including £1 billion to support up to six million, 15 hour tutoring courses for disadvantaged school children; a £302 million Recovery Premium, weighted so the schools with more disadvantaged pupils receive more funding and £22 million to scale up proven approaches to reduce the attainment gap.

As part of the Department's long standing commitment to addressing this issue, we already target funding towards schools serving disadvantaged pupils as part of the National Funding Formula. The Pupil Premium targets further funding to disadvantaged pupils and plays a crucial role in the work of schools to progress pupils' education. Through this, we are providing over £2.5 billion in the 2021/22 financial year.

Recognising the benefits of place based interventions, our Opportunity Areas programme brings together local partners to break down entrenched problems of educational achievement, to target additional resources to particular schools and particular cohorts of children and young people.

### ■ Financial Services: Education

**Lee Anderson:**

[\[21336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that children and young people develop financial knowledge.

**Nick Gibb:**

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed. In 2014, for the first time, financial literacy was



made statutory within the National Curriculum as part of the citizenship curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds.

We also introduced a rigorous Mathematics curriculum, which provides young people with the knowledge and financial skills to make important financial decisions. The Government has published statutory programmes of study for mathematics and citizenship that outline what pupils should learn about financial education from Key Stages 1 to 4.

In the primary Mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic knowledge that pupils should have. This knowledge is vital, as a strong understanding of numeracy and numbers will underpin the pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, percentages. There is also some specific content about financial education such as calculations with money.

Finance education forms part of the citizenship curriculum which can be taught at all key stages and is compulsory at Key Stages 3 and 4: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>. Financial education ensures that pupils are taught the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and managing financial risk. At secondary school, pupils are taught about income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

The Department works closely with the Money and Pensions Service and other stakeholders such as Her Majesty's Treasury, to consider what can be discovered from other sector initiatives and whether there is scope to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

## ■ Pupil Premium

**Catherine McKinnell:**

**[23187]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish statistics on the value of pupil premium allocations for (a) mainstream and (b) special schools in 2021-22 in each (i) local authority and (ii) parliamentary constituency on the basis of using school census data taken at January 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

Pupil premium allocations for the 2021/22 financial year have been published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2021-to-2022>.

The Department has also published the impact of moving to using the October census for the pupil premium for mainstream and special schools. This is available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability>.

The calculation of pupil premium allocations is resource intensive. There are no plans to calculate hypothetical allocations showing what each school would have received if the pupil premium had been allocated on a different basis.

## ■ School Libraries

**Stuart Anderson:**

**[22023]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help schools (a) set up and (b) grow onsite libraries.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department believes that all pupils deserve to be taught a knowledge-rich curriculum that promotes the extensive reading of books and other kinds of texts, both in and out of school. School libraries complement public libraries in allowing pupils to do this. It is for individual schools to decide how best to provide and maintain a library service for their pupils, including whether to employ a qualified librarian. Many head teachers recognise the important role school libraries play in improving literacy and encouraging pupils to read for pleasure and ensure that suitable library facilities are provided. These may take different forms and could be a book corner in a school classroom, rather than a separate space.

The Department is also committing £1.8 billion this financial year in capital funding to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings, including primary school libraries. Local authorities, academy trusts, and other responsible bodies are best placed to prioritise capital allocations according to local need, including on library facilities where that is the priority.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Catherine West:**

**[21309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when updated guidance will be provided to schools on the safe running of transitional, taster and open days for new pupils in advance of the autumn 2021 term.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools can offer transitional, taster or open days to pupils from other schools within the existing framework of restrictions.

Schools should complete thorough risk assessments before running transitional, taster and open days in schools, to ensure that they are run in line with their system of controls and align with the advice contained within school guidance and the roadmap out of lockdown: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?priority-taxonomy=b350e61d-1db9-4cc2-bb44-fab02882ac25> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary#step-3---not-before-17-may>.

This means that traditional transitional days are unlikely to be feasible this year, but the Department is keen not to restrict individual schools from designing events which maintain the integrity of bubbles and adhere to the system of controls in place.

**Catherine West:**

[\[21311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on educational attainment of the need for whole class quarantine where a covid-19 outbreak occurs in school.

**Nick Gibb:**

Tracing close contacts of those who test positive for COVID-19 remains important for preventing the transmission of COVID-19. The Department's priority is to keep as many children as possible in face to face education. While in some cases a whole class might be required to self-isolate, many schools are using seating plans and other means to minimise the number of individuals that need to isolate.

Where pupils are required to self-isolate, schools are still required to provide 3 to 5 hours of remote education per day depending on their Key Stage. This includes either recorded or live direct teaching as well as time for pupils to work independently to complete assignments that have been set.

To support schools in delivering remote education throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has delivered over 1.3 million laptops and tablets to schools, local authorities and academy trusts for disadvantaged children and young people.

The Department remains committed to helping all pupils make up education lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. That is why we have announced an extra £1.4 billion to support education recovery for children aged 2 to 19 in schools, colleges and early years, in addition to the £1.7 billion already announced.

## ■ Schools: Finance

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[21297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the additional discretion available to schools by academisation, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that school funds are directed at teaching staff and the pupils in their care.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department's priority is the delivery of world class education for all children from all backgrounds. The greater freedom and flexibility that academy trusts enjoy enables the strongest leaders to take responsibility for supporting more schools, developing great teachers and allowing schools to focus on what really matters – the high quality teaching of a broad and ambitious curriculum.

The 2020 Academies Financial Handbook states that the central responsibility for academy trusts is that they "must take full responsibility for their financial affairs, stewardship of assets and use resources efficiently to maximise outcomes for pupils". Academy trusts work with parents and their local community to deliver on this responsibility. The new 2021 Academies Trust Handbook, also known as the Academies Financial Handbook, effective from 1 September 2021, reiterates the importance of involving parents in trust governance, helping to ensure that boards

stay accessible and connected to the community they serve and support robust decision making. The 2021 Academies Trust Handbook is available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-financial-handbook/academy-trust-handbook-2021>.

Academy trusts lead the way on accountability and transparency. They provide a significant amount of information to the public, setting out the trust and academy level expenditure. The Department also publishes individual academy allocation and expenditure data. This is easily accessible at individual academy level on the schools financial benchmarking website, which allows expenditure to be broken down by theme, including per pupil spend and proportion of expenditure on staff pay and resources. The schools financial benchmarking website is available here: <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk>.

The Department operates an effective oversight programme that provides assurance to Parliament and the public. This is delivered through a range of assurance activity and wider intelligence gathering, including from independently audited financial information and educational performance data. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Regional Schools Commissioners work together to build a joined-up picture of each school and academy trust. They take a risk-based approach to intervene proportionately on the rare occasions when needed.

The ESFA works with academy trusts to share good practice and provide support to help them build capacity and strengthen their financial and governance position. They also offer a school resource management adviser service. This is a free service providing hands-on support from experienced school professionals who work with schools to identify opportunities for improved spending decisions which will allow money to be reinvested back into critical areas of school activity.

Academy trusts are delivering very high standard of governance, educational and financial performance. The latest published data shows that 99.3% of academy trust accounts received unqualified opinions.

## ■ Schools: Uniforms

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[21271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to include in his Department's guidance on school uniforms a description of the materials used in uniforms that should reduce the use of synthetic microplastic-shedding; and what steps he plans to take to enable students and parents to make more sustainable choices when purchasing compulsory branded items of uniform.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[21272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with school uniform suppliers on the potential merits of reducing synthetic materials in school uniforms.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is for the governing body of a school (or the academy trust in the case of academies) to determine their school's uniform policy. Under the Education (Guidance about the Cost of School Uniform) Act 2021, the forthcoming statutory guidance is limited in scope to the cost aspects of school uniform. Although the guidance will make clear that schools should give high priority to cost considerations and value for money, that does not prevent them from taking account of other issues which are important to them, such as sustainability.

Within the statutory guidance the Department intends to outline expectations that all schools should make second hand uniform available for parents to acquire. Not only will this help parents to manage the cost of school uniform, but by extending the life cycle of garments, this will be more sustainable.

The Department has met regularly with the Schoolwear Association to discuss a range of issues relating to the guidance and the supply of school uniform. We will continue to meet with them to refine the statutory guidance to ensure that it is fair to all those involved and takes into account the views of school uniform suppliers, manufacturers and retailers.

**■ Student Wastage: Coronavirus****Chi Onwurah:**[\[21219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 2969, what steps he has taken to specifically target support to those students most at risk of dropping out of higher education during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

This government is fully aware that this year has been very challenging for certain groups of students. We have put in place a range of mitigations to support them, so that they can continue with their studies successfully and achieve good outcomes.

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 higher education (HE) providers to draw on. HE providers 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 of IT equipment; mental health support and help for students that have already applied for hardship funding previously but need further support.

International students have also been able to request access to hardship funds through their provider and they can be confident that they can express these concerns without any impact on their immigration status.

We have worked with the Office for Students (OfS) to launch the online mental health platform Student Space, worth up to £3 million. This is in addition to the £15 million we have asked them to allocate to student mental health initiatives next year to address the challenges to student mental health posed by the transition to university.

This will target those students in greatest need of such services, including vulnerable groups and hard to reach students.

The government's expectations are very clear: universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students regardless of their background have the resources to study remotely when this is necessary. HE providers must continue to comply with their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that education and learning is accessible to all students. When making changes to the delivery of their courses, providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. It is a registration requirement of the OfS that all HE providers have Access and Participation plans, and these are monitored to ensure that universities are acting on them.

Prior to 17 May, we advised the sector that certain groups of students should be able to return to their term time addresses, even if they were not receiving in-person teaching. These included students who did not have access to adequate study facilities and those whose mental health concerns made this necessary.

#### ■ **Swimming: Children**

**Catherine West:**

[\[21308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on children's access to school swimming lessons.

**Nick Gibb:**

Swimming and water safety is a vital life skill, which is why it is a mandatory part of the curriculum for physical education at primary school. The Department recognises that children have missed out on opportunities to learn to swim due to COVID-19 restrictions. We are working closely with Swim England and other swimming and water safety organisations to support pupils to return safely to swimming and to promote water safety education. This includes an additional £10.1 million to improve use of school sport facilities, including swimming pools.

Water safety education is a priority for the summer period to enable children to know how to be safe in and around water. The Department has made new virtual water safety lessons available through Oak National Academy and has supported the Royal Life Saving Society UK's Drowning Prevention Week 2021.

#### ■ **Teachers: Disability**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[21296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will commission research on employers' behaviour with regards to providing reasonable adjustments for disabled teachers.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has produced guidance for schools, entitled "The Equality Act 2010 and schools", to help them understand how the Equality Act 2010 affects them and

how to fulfil their duties. The guidance is available to view here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf).

The guidance sets out that, as employers, schools are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for their employees or potential employees. They must make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage. They must also take reasonable steps to provide any necessary auxiliary aids and services.

The Department continues to look closely at teaching workforce data, such as through the school workforce census, to engage the sector and explore opportunities for further work in this area.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[21976]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure it meets the additional covid-19-related needs of disabled teachers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has published guidance to support schools to understand how the Equality Act affects them and to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010, available to view here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf). The Department expects all schools to adhere to all aspects of employment and disability legislation.

The guidance sets out that schools as employers are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for their employees or potential employees. They must make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage. They must also take reasonable steps to provide any necessary auxiliary aids and services.

At each stage of the Department's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have listened to the latest medical and scientific advice. The Department has provided regularly updated guidance to support schools, colleges, and nurseries, with input from education leaders, unions, and sector bodies and in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive. As the published guidance sets out, employers have a legal obligation to protect their employees from harm. The guidance is available to view here:

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

Schools, colleges, and nurseries should continue to follow the measures set out in the guidance. By assessing risk and implementing all measures, including ventilating occupied spaces and cleaning, schools will effectively manage risks and create an inherently safer environment.

All elements of the system of controls are essential in effectively minimising risks. The way different schools, colleges, and nurseries implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances. PHE advises that the implementation of the system of controls based on a thorough risk assessment is a sufficient and appropriate way to reduce risk in schools, colleges, and nurseries.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Amazon: Consumer Goods

**Catherine West:** [\[21310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives of Amazon following reports of large quantities of usable electrical goods being destroyed by that company.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We are aware of the recent news regarding Amazon and the alleged destruction of unsold stock and are closely monitoring the situation.

Businesses who handle waste including companies like Amazon are obliged to follow the waste hierarchy, under our Waste Regulations 2011, which requires action to prevent waste as the priority option. Failure to meet the legal obligation to take all reasonable steps to apply this can lead to enforcement action from the Environment Agency in England.

No business should be sending unwanted electricals to landfill or incineration. We have a producer responsibility system in place to ensure all waste electricals are collected and treated properly, in line with the waste hierarchy.

We in contact with Amazon regarding this issue, and have been absolutely clear that more goods must be reused or recycled to support the Government's ambition to build a more circular economy. Ministers and officials will shortly be meeting with Amazon to discuss this further.

### ■ Animal Products: Imports

**Luke Pollard:** [\[22018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many imports of hunting trophies from species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species were recorded in the UK in 2020.

**Rebecca Pow:**

12 imports of hunting trophies from species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species were recorded in the UK in 2020.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[22019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many imports of hunting trophies from (a) African Lion, *Panthera leo*, (b) Tiger, *Panthera tigris*, (c)



African elephant, *Loxodonta africana*, (d) Cheetah, *Acinonyx jubatus*, and (e) Polar bear, *Ursus maritimus* were recorded under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, in the UK in (a) 2016, (b) 2017, (c) 2018, (d) 2019, and (d) 2020.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The table below illustrates how many imports of hunting trophies from African Lion, *Panthera leo*, Tiger, *Panthera tigris*, African elephant, *Loxodonta africana*, Cheetah, *Acinonyx jubatus*, and Polar bear, *Ursus maritimus* were recorded under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, in the UK in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
African Lion, <i>Panthera leo</i>	4	9	6	5	4
Tiger, <i>Panthera tigris</i>	0	0	0	0	0
African elephant, <i>Loxodonta africana</i>	7	6	6	2	3
Cheetah, <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Polar bear, <i>Ursus maritimus</i>	1	3	1	3	1

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[22020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) R (ranching animal), (b) D (Captive-bred animal), (c) C (Bred in captivity) and (d) F (Born in captivity) hunting trophies were recorded under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) entering the UK in (a) 2016, (b) 2017, (c) 2018, (d) 2019, and (e) 2020.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The table below illustrates how many R (ranching animal), D (Captive-bred animal), C (Bred in captivity) and F (Born in captivity) hunting trophies were recorded under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) entering the UK in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
R (ranching animal)	0	0	0	0	0
D (Captive-bred animal)	0	0	0	0	0
C (Bred in captivity)	3	4	6	3	3
F (Born in captivity)	0	0	0	0	0

### ■ Cats and Dogs: Imports

**Neil Parish:**

[\[21203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to ban the non-commercial importation of pregnant cats as well as pregnant dogs.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 8 June. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and on the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation. These restrictions could relate to the movement of pets below a prescribed age and to the movement of heavily pregnant pets under the commercial and non-commercial rules. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders prior to the introduction of the legislation to ensure that our final measures are well considered and are guided by the latest evidence.

The Government is planning to launch a consultation later this year on the proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. The consultation will allow us to refine the scope of the measures, including whether they apply to cats.

### ■ Cats: Animal Welfare and Smuggling

**Neil Parish:**

[\[21202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to increase the minimum age a kitten can enter the UK non-commercially to six months in order to prevent kitten smuggling and protect kitten welfare.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on the 8 June. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack

down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and on the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation. These restrictions could relate to the movement of pets below a prescribed age and to the movement of heavily pregnant pets under the commercial and non-commercial rules. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders prior to the introduction of the legislation to ensure that our final measures are well considered and are guided by the latest evidence.

The Government is planning to launch a consultation later this year on the proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. The consultation will allow us to refine the scope of the measures, including whether they apply to cats.

### ■ **Cats: Disease Control**

**Neil Parish:** [\[21204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will introduce compulsory tick and tapeworm treatments for cats entering the UK non-commercially.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Pet Travel and Illegal import clauses of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill focus on measures to improve welfare of pets entering Great Britain. We remain aware of the concerns around ticks and tick-borne disease and tapeworm in cats and our future policy will be guided by risk assessment. Defra also continues to monitor the disease situation through the Tick Surveillance Scheme.

### ■ **Cats: Rabies**

**Neil Parish:** [\[21205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will introduce a requirement for a (a) rabies blood test for cats before entry into the UK and (b) wait period post vaccination which is in line with the incubation period of rabies.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Pet Travel and Illegal import clauses of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill focus on measures to improve welfare of pets entering GB. Recent quantitative risk assessments have concluded that the risk of a pet animal with rabies entering the UK under the pet travel rules is very low. Defra continues to monitor the disease situation.

### ■ **Fishing Catches**

**Deidre Brock:** [\[21928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 29 of April, 2021 to Question 185932 on fishing catches, whether he has sought to quantify the economic benefits of the fishing industry referred to in that answer.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The catching sector contributes £467m to the economy per year (35% of the seafood industry) (2018). There are around 12,000 fishermen in the UK fleet – most (78%) of them working full time. In 2019, UK vessels landed a total of 622,000 tonnes of sea fish, with a value of £987m. The economic benefits of the catching sector also provide jobs and incomes for other sectors supporting the fisher including firms that produce fishing vessels and gear, exporters, processors etc.

The Aquaculture sector contributed £375m (GVA) to the UK economy in 2018.

The seafood processing sector employs around 19,000 people (full time equivalents) (2018), contributing £537m to the UK economy (2018).

**Food: Allergies****Justin Madders:**[\[21248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of issuing financial penalties against companies who have to recall food items due to not disclosing allergens.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Food Information Regulations 2014 already provide for criminal sanctions including fines in respect of non-disclosure or incorrect information around the presence of allergens in food. While some cases of undisclosed allergenic ingredients will be detected by enforcement officials, it is often the company themselves who detect and notify authorities of an issue while simultaneously withdrawing the affected food from the market. Imposing a penalty on the basis of the product withdrawal and recalls rather than the dangerous non-disclosure of allergenic ingredients would potentially hamper the current high levels of transparency on this issue. This in turn could lead to an increased risk to consumers and their safety should the threat of penalties deter notification of non-compliances to authorities and subsequent communication of the risk to consumers.

**Reservoirs: Brent****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[21192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 1 March 2021 to Question 155002 on Reservoirs: Brent, on what dates the Priestley Way trash screen that sits on the River Brent and enters the Welsh Harp was cleared by the Environment Agency in the last 12 months.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA) visits and checks the Priestley Way trash screen on a weekly basis to ensure blockages are not increasing flood risk to properties and infrastructure upstream. The EA clears the screen when it deems the accumulation of debris to present an increase in flood risk. The EA does not hold data on specific clearance dates.

The EA acknowledges that the accumulation of debris on site is unsightly however the screen has an important role in preventing debris from entering the larger protected Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) area.

### ■ Rights of Way: Schools

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[21287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ensure that local public rights of way do not pass through school sites.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Public rights of way are a local issue and this matter is the responsibility of the local County Council.

A public right of way is added to the network by either proving the way existed through historical evidence or proving the public has used the route for 20 years. The use needs to be at the appropriate level. Whether the route is amenable to local residents is not considered at this stage as it is an evidence-based process only.

Once a route is recognised as part of the network, a public path order may be made to change the status of the route by agreement with the local authority. Here convenience, safety and other such concerns are taken into consideration. In both instances, the public has the right to object to the proposed changes to the network and the local authority advertises the changes to give residents the opportunity to give their views.

Defra is planning to lay legislation as soon as reasonably practicable to streamline the process of recording and changing rights of way. The rights of way reform project will introduce a "right to apply", a formal process which landowners can use to apply for a diversion or extinguishment of a public right of way on their land, supported by new guidance. The "right to apply" will make the process of seeking to divert a right of way more efficient and accessible for all.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa

**Andy Slaughter:**

[\[21164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) raise with his Israeli counterpart the death of 15-year-old Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa on 16 June 2021 and (b) seek assurance that there will be a criminal investigation into his death.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is aware of the reports surrounding the death of Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa. We urge the Government of Israel to conduct a swift and transparent investigation. 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. We remain concerned by the number of Palestinians, including children, killed in the West Bank and Gaza.

## ■ Arctic: Russia

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[21223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking in response to the advance of Russia into the Arctic Circle.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK recognises that Russia, as an Arctic State, is an important presence in the region. The UK's 2018 Arctic Policy Framework sets out our vision and priorities for the region. This is for an Arctic that is safe, secure and peaceful. The UK seeks to support the maintaining of high levels of international cooperation and low tensions in the Arctic, including through working with our Allies and partners to demonstrate international rights to freedom of access and navigation in the region. As such, we welcome the commitments to maintaining peace, stability and constructive cooperation made by all Arctic States at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Reykjavik in May.

In 2020 the UK recommenced naval operations in the Arctic. This included operations with a US-led task group in May 2020 and a UK-led task group in September, which included US and Norwegian vessels. Operations in the Arctic take place in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and are carefully calibrated to minimise risk and conducted in conjunction with Allies and partners, when practically possible, to demonstrate unity of purpose. We remain committed to treaty-based risk reduction measures with Russia: we, like eleven other NATO Allies, have an established Treaty with Russia on the Prevention of Incidents at Sea.

## ■ Armed Conflict: Children

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[21866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) legal, (b) political, (c) diplomatic, (d) financial and (e) material steps he is taking to promote warring parties' compliance with international standards for the protection of children in armed conflict.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK use our permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) membership to ensure conflict-related child protection issues remain a key part of UNSC discussions and that UN operations address child protection issues. We regularly calls upon all UN Member States to comply with international legal obligations and endorse and fully implement key child protection instruments, in particular the Safe Schools Declaration - a political commitment to protect education from attack.

As a member of the UNSC Children and Armed Conflict Working Group, the UK applies diplomatic pressure to warring parties to enter into concrete UN action plans to verify and release any children associated with armed groups and forces, to prevent re-recruitment and ensure the provision of appropriate reintegration and rehabilitation assistance. Recently, we have negotiated strong calls to action for parties to conflict in Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Colombia. We also press for the inclusion of child protection provisions in UN peacekeeping mandate renewals and resolutions. Financially, we will fund UNICEF to strengthen monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[21805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the UK's contribution will be to the G7 target of vaccinating the world by 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK has played a leading role in supporting global access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. The UK is among the largest donors to COVAX, which aims to provide vaccine doses for up to 30% of the population in low and middle-income countries by early 2022. The UK's investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has also been a key contribution to the global vaccination effort. So far, over 500 million doses of the vaccine have been distributed worldwide at non-profit prices, with two-thirds going to lower and middle-income countries.

The UK is proud that our G7 Presidency secured agreement from leaders to commit to sharing at least 870 million doses over the next year, including a commitment from the UK to share 100 million doses. In addition, we are working closely with G7 and international partners to mobilise international financing, increase vaccine supply, and support in-country delivery, including community mobilisation, and building vaccine confidence.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[21995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to offer covid-19 vaccinations to British citizens living abroad.

**Nigel Adams:**

There are no plans to roll out the UK's NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme to British nationals living overseas. As a residence-based system, the NHS does not provide healthcare (including vaccinations) outside the UK.

Wherever possible, British nationals should aim to be vaccinated in the country where they live. We are providing information through the Travel Advice pages and 'Living In' guides on gov.uk to inform British nationals of healthcare options available to

them, including on the availability of COVID-19 vaccines. The UK is also playing a leading international role to ensure global access to COVID-19 vaccines. For example, we have contributed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to ensure that the 92 most vulnerable economies have access to COVID-19 vaccines. The UK has also committed to sharing 100 million vaccine doses by June 2022, with the majority going to COVAX.

#### ■ **Gaza: International Assistance**

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that international aid to Gaza via the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism is not misappropriated by Hamas.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO has robust controls against fraud and diversion of aid. We work with implementers and partners that have strong safeguards in place, which reduces risk and ensures the maximum impact of UK aid for Palestinians. FCDO funding agreements commit partners to understand and comply with UK and international counter-terrorism legislation. In Gaza, we implement robust controls to monitor spending, including enhanced due diligence assessments, annual audits, and regular field visits. All these ensure that UK aid reaches its intended beneficiaries.

#### ■ **Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

**Claire Hanna:** [\[21358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the calls of the UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030 to fully mobilise the resource needs of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria through its replenishment conferences, if the Government will make it its policy to remain a leading donor for the Global Fund at its seventh replenishment in 2022.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is proud to be a leading donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which we have supported since its inception in 2002. Future UK contributions to the Global Fund, including its seventh replenishment, will be determined as part of HMG's forthcoming Spending Review.

#### ■ **Holidays Abroad: Coronavirus**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[21846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of overseas resort destinations imposing measures to prevent people from countries that their government has designated covid-19 green light from coming into contact with people from countries that their government has designated as amber or red light.



**Nigel Adams:**

FCDO travel advice provides guidance on COVID and non-COVID risks abroad. It aims to inform British nationals of the risks of travelling to a country so that they can make informed decisions about travelling. It is aimed at British nationals, wherever they live, not just those living in the UK. The amount of information the FCDO can provide varies from place to place. For some parts of the world we may be able to offer very detailed advice; for others we may not. We cannot give tailored advice for individual itineraries.

The FCDO currently advises against all but essential travel to many countries and territories on the basis of COVID risks. Whether travel is essential or not is a personal decision; individuals should make an informed decision on whether or not to travel based on their personal circumstances, judgement of the risks, relevant legislation or regulations where they are resident and the entry requirements of their destination country.

**■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review****Sarah Champion:**[\[21234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will list the current and future strategies being developed to implement the Integrated Review.

**James Cleverly:**

The Integrated Review was published on 16 March and can be found on gov.uk. The review is the most comprehensive articulation of security, defence, development and foreign policy published by a British Government in decades. The IR sets out a vision for the UK in 2030, offers an assessment of the international context to 2030, a Strategic Framework to guide action to 2025, sets out the Government's major national security and international policy objectives and sets direction for cross-government activity, including the development of more detailed strategies where necessary.

The Integrated Review includes commitments to develop the following strategies:

- Defence and Security Industrial Strategy
- Comprehensive Cyber Strategy
- International Development Strategy
- Updated Investment Strategy
- National Space Strategy
- Defence Command Paper
- Defence AI Strategy
- Media Literacy Strategy
- Comprehensive National Resilience Strategy

- Revised Biosecurity Strategy

## ■ Iran: Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[22061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with international partners on Iran's financial and technical support for the Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as terror groups in Gaza.

**James Cleverly:**

We have long been clear about our concern over Iran's continued destabilising activity throughout the region including its political, financial and military support to a number of militant and proscribed groups. Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001. The UK maintains a no contact policy with the group in its entirety.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Power

**Greg Smith:**

[\[22026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with international partners on pursuing a strengthened nuclear deal that addresses Iran's support for terrorism and ballistic missile programme.

**James Cleverly:**

A restored and fully implemented Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could provide the confidence to further address regional and security concerns. As such, we welcome and support President Biden's commitment to not just return to the deal, but to strengthen and extend it. A substantive effort is required to improve regional security and Iran's role in destabilising the region needs to be addressed

We have been engaged in intensive discussions in Vienna with other 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.

## ■ Iran: Uranium

**Greg Smith:**

[\[22027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications of his policies of reports of Iran's successful enrichment of uranium to 60 per cent purity.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran continues its systematic non-compliance with its nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). On 16 April Iran announced that it had started uranium enrichment up to 60% using advanced centrifuges, which is a serious and worrying development in violation of its nuclear commitments. The production of

highly enriched uranium is an important step in the production of a nuclear weapon. Iran has no credible civilian need for enrichment at this level.

We are currently engaged in intensive discussions in Vienna with other participants and the US 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.

### ■ Israel: Guided Weapons

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[21165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will call for Israel to investigate the firing of a missile by an Israeli warplane on 12 May 2021.

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[21166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will call on the Government of Israel to investigate the firing of two missiles at a two-storey home in Gaza City's Al-Manara neighbourhood on 11 May 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

### ■ Israel: Palestinians

**Bob Blackman:** [\[21191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Palestinian Authority on its decision to reject the offer of one million covid-19 vaccines from Israel.

**James Cleverly:**

We recognise the Palestinian Authority's responsibilities for vaccinations under the Oslo Accords (under Article 17). We welcome the steps that the parties have taken so far to coordinate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage further dialogue in this regard. The British Embassy Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General Jerusalem are in regular contact with the relevant parties and continue to encourage cooperation and raise the issue of timely access to vaccines.

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[22012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 16273 on Middle East: Peace Negotiations, what peacebuilding projects between Israelis and Palestinians the UK funds.

**Stephen Morgan:** [22013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the Government (a) spends annually on average and (b) spent in each of the last three years through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Middle East Peace Process (MEPP).

**James Cleverly:**

The Conflict Security and Stability Fund: Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) publishes an annual programme summary on development tracker that outlines the annual budget and a short summary of the programme. The link to these summaries is at: <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-3-CSSF-06-000023/documents>. It also includes a breakdown of projects, including the peacebuilding projects Constituencies for Peace and Support for Israeli NGOs.

## ■ LGBT People

**Crispin Blunt:** [21123]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to work with LGBTI defenders at risk around the world; and if he will incorporate objectives on improving protection for LGBTI defenders into relevant Departmental plans.

**Crispin Blunt:** [21124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding he has made available to LGBTI defenders in human rights priority countries.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK recognises that LGBTI civil society organisations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders play an essential role in promoting and protecting LGBTI human rights. Our overseas missions prioritise engagement with local human rights defenders and fund programme work through local CSOs, and these feature in their human rights strategies.. In 2020/21 the UK committed about £5.5 million to targeted international LGBT+ rights programmes. Providing funding for LGBTI rights programme work remains a UK government priority

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Sarah Champion:** [21233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish the (a) full methodology and (b) results of the equalities impact assessment that the Government carried out to decide where the reductions would be made to the Official Development Assistance budget for 2021-22.

**Nigel Adams:**

During the 2021/22 ODA allocation process, the FCDO considered risks and impacts to inform advice to Ministers. An overarching Equalities Impact Assessment analysed impacts across bilateral country spend. The assessment was considered by Ministers

before decisions were made. It showed no evidence that programmes targeting those with protected characteristics are more likely to be reduced or discontinued than other programmes.

The FCDO is reviewing the case to put the assessment into the public domain.

## ■ Overseas Aid: HIV Infection

**Claire Hanna:** [\[21357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030 which calls on donors to fulfil respective official development assistance commitments including the commitment to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income, if he will set a date on when the Government will return to the 0.7 per cent commitment.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on official development assistance when the fiscal situation allows.

The economic situation is difficult to predict therefore we are monitoring the situation and planning accordingly.

## ■ Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to recommendation 21(a) of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published in 2019, what progress he has made on implementing that recommendation; and what further steps he plans to take to implement that recommendation.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022. On recommendation 21, the then Foreign Secretary wrote to Ministerial counterparts to ask them to take note of the Review's recommendations. The contents of paragraphs 21a-21f will inform planning for any discussion.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to recommendation 21(b) of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published in 2019, what progress he has made on

implementing that recommendation; and what further steps he plans to take to implement that recommendation.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to recommendation 21(c) of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published in 2019, what progress he has made on implementing that recommendation; and what further steps he plans to take to implement that recommendation.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has take to progress the implementation of recommendation 21d of the Truro Review in accordance with the Government's Manifesto commitment.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to progress the implementation of recommendation 21e of the Truro Review in accordance with the Government's Manifesto commitment.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022. On recommendation 21, the then Foreign Secretary wrote to Ministerial counterparts to ask them to take note of the Review's recommendations. The contents of paragraphs 21a-21f will inform planning for any discussion in a future Cabinet meeting.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to recommendation 21(f) of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published in 2019, what progress he has made on implementing that recommendation; and what further steps he plans to take to implement that recommendation.

**Nigel Adams:**

During the 2021/22 ODA allocation process, the FCDO considered risks and impacts to inform advice to Ministers. An overarching Equalities Impact Assessment analysed impacts across bilateral country spend. The assessment was considered by Ministers before decisions were made. It showed no evidence that programmes targeting those with protected characteristics are more likely to be reduced or discontinued than other programmes.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the required independent review of the Truro Review is undertaken in a thorough and timely manner.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[22059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to recommendation 22 of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published in 2019, what steps his Department is taking to appoint a lead to independently review the recommendations made by that review.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022. On recommendation 22, we will commission an independent review in good time to take place at the completion of the three-year implementation period.

## ■ Philippines: LGBT People

**Crispin Blunt:** [\[21126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to challenge impunity for killings of LGBTI defenders in the Philippines.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of LGBT+ people. We are fundamentally opposed to all forms of discrimination and work to uphold the rights and freedoms of LGBT+ people in all circumstances.

The UK remains concerned about reports of human rights abuses in the Philippines, including as part of the "war on drugs", and the treatment of some human and land rights defenders and journalists. We note with concern reports of the killings of LGBT+ activists. I regularly raise human rights with the Philippines Government and last discussed this issue with Philippine Foreign Minister Locsin on the 23 March. The British Embassy in Manila continues to support the LGBT+ community in the Philippines through events and advocacy.

## ■ Sri Lanka: Environment Protection and Water Supply

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[21348\]](#)

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

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[21349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Sri Lankan counterpart on the (a) water security and (b) environmental situations in Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[21350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of non-governmental organisations on the (a) water security and (b) environmental situations in Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

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

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

## ■ Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

**Claire Hanna:** [\[21356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to support the provision of humanitarian aid in the Tigray region.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Ethiopia. More than 350,000 people are assessed to be in famine-like conditions - in total more than anywhere else in the world. A region-wide famine in Tigray is now likely if conflict intensifies and impediments to the delivery of humanitarian aid continue. The UK with other G7 leaders have called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and unimpeded humanitarian access as set out in the G7 Summit Communique of 13 June. All G7 nations and the EU, along with a growing number of other nations have also joined the UK's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

On 14 June, I announced the UK will allocate £16.7 million to the crisis in Tigray. This will support civil-military coordination to help aid get to those in need and address famine risk through the provision of healthcare, sanitation, and nutrition. This



allocation is on top of the existing £27 million in 2020-21 already directed to the response, and an additional £4 million allocated to support nutrition and vaccinations in Tigray. This brings UK total funding to support response to the crisis to £47.7 million. Our Embassy in Addis Ababa has visited Tigray regularly to assess the situation and guide our response. The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, visited Tigray in May. Our Ambassador in Addis Ababa also visited in the week of 14 June. During these visits we have heard many harrowing reports of atrocities committed by all parties to the conflict. As I stated in my recent tweet of 23 June, we urge all parties to the conflict to protect civilians, respect international humanitarian law and agree an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

## ■ United Nations: Children's Rights

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[21867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the UN Secretary-General on (a) the importance of holding all perpetrators of grave violations of children's rights to the same standard and (b) ensuring that his annual list of perpetrators of grave violations against children is based solely on the UN's own evidence of violations.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK continues to highlight the importance of holding all perpetrators of grave violations of children's rights to the same standard, including by calling on the UN Secretary General for greater transparency on the decision-making process behind his annual list of perpetrators. At the UN Security Council, we highlight that the UN's own evidence through the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism must continue its evidence-based approach, and rise above politics to focus on the interests of every child.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[21868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on child safety of the UN Secretary-General's exclusion of (a) the Saudi and Emirati-led Coalition and (b) the Israeli security forces in his annual list of perpetrators of grave violations against children.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK continues to call on the UN Secretary General for greater transparency on listing decisions. The UK condemns in the strongest terms all grave violations and abuses committed against children in Yemen, and we urge the parties to the conflict to uphold their human rights obligations under applicable international law. While Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We are gravely concerned by UN reports that medical installations, schools, and houses in Gaza

have been destroyed or damaged. The UK is providing £3.2 million of new UK aid to the UN agency for Palestine refugees.

#### ■ Westminster Foundation for Democracy: Finance

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[23297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department has allocated to the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in 2021.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* A full budget for FY2021/22 and a final audited spend for FY2020/21 for the Westminster Foundation for Democracy will be published in due course, including in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Abortion: Drugs

**Mr David Jones:** [\[23105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's consultation, Home use of both pills for early medical abortion, which closed on 26 February 2021, whether individuals or organisations other than Ministers or officials of his Department (a) have and (b) have had access in real time to the responses to that consultation received by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr David Jones:** [\[23106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's consultation, Home use of both pills for early medical abortion, which closed on 26 February 2021, what steps he is taking to ensure the impartial assessment and evaluation of empirical evidence collected in the course of that consultation.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* An external company has been contracted by the Department to undertake independent analysis of consultation responses. They are able to access data for reporting and analysis purposes at the Department's request and are supporting the impartial analysis of responses to the consultation on the temporary approval. The strength and robustness of evidence or research submitted as part of this consultation will be assessed and considered alongside any potential conflicts of interest.

#### ■ Arthritis: Medical Treatments

**Jim Shannon:** [\[23189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that new treatment for arthritis approved in 2021 will be available on the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for providing evidence-based guidance to the National Health Service on whether new medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE is committed to publishing draft guidance on new medicines at the time of licensing, with final guidance published within three months of licensing wherever possible. The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended in a NICE appraisal. NICE is currently appraising multiple treatments for arthritis and will publish its guidance in due course.

**■ Cancer: Young People****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[21987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing ringfenced funding to ensure all young people diagnosed with cancer can access support from specialist psychologists.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have established a task and finish group to review psychosocial support for people affected by cancer, including young people. The NHS Long Term Plan states that, by 2021, where appropriate every person, including young people, diagnosed with cancer should receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan based on holistic needs assessment, end of treatment summaries and health and wellbeing information and support, including for mental health needs. All patients should have access to the right expertise and support.

**■ Care Homes and Hospices: Coronavirus****Alex Sobel:**[\[22017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the guidance for care home visiting differs with that for hospice visiting in respect of covid-19 outbreak restrictions.

**Helen Whately:**

Care homes and hospices are different settings and their residents have different care needs. For this reason, guidance must differ for each other these settings in respect of visiting during COVID-19 outbreaks. Hospices provide care for people from the point at which their illness is diagnosed as terminal to the end of their life. Most hospices are independent, charitable organisations, with visiting policies at the discretion of the hospice manager.

**■ Contraceptives: Coronavirus****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[21167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure immediate postpartum contraception is made available in all maternity settings as part of service restoration in a covid-19 recovery context.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 28 June 2021]:* During the COVID-19 pandemic, some maternity units introduced successful pilots of immediate postnatal contraception to support contraceptive choice and minimise the number of face-to-face appointments a woman receives. Public Health England has gathered evidence on these pilots, which is available at the following link:

<https://phelibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/practice-examples/srhc19/>

**■ Dialysis Machines****Mr Laurence Robertson:****[12060]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in each clinical commissioning group have received dialysis treatment in (a) a clinical setting and (b) at home in each of the last five years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS Digital has advised that information on dialysis treatment outside a clinical setting is not held. A table showing a count of episodes and patients receiving kidney dialysis, by clinical commissioning group from 2016-17 to 2019-20 is attached. Data for 2020-21 is not currently available.

**Attachments:**

1. Episodes and patients receiving kidney dialysis [FORMATTED TABLE PQ12060 .xlsx]

**■ Eating Disorders****Daisy Cooper:****[23345]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Impact Assessment entitled Mandating calorie labelling of food and drink in out-of-home settings which identifies conflicting evidence on the harms to those with eating disorders, if he will pause the implementation of mandatory calorie labelling for restaurants while a study is commissioned to examine that matter thoroughly.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have listened throughout the consultation process and put in place reasonable adjustments to help mitigate any unintended consequences. This includes a provision in the Regulations which permits businesses to provide a menu without calorie information at the express request of the customer.

**■ Gambling****Jonathan Ashworth:****[23197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle gambling addiction in 2021-22.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Health Service has committed to create up to 15 specialist problem gambling clinics by 2023/24, and work continues on the phased expansion of these services.

**Gender Recognition: Surgery****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[23314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that gender affirming surgery is available to transgender men.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement committed additional funding for specialised surgical services for individuals with gender dysphoria in 2020/21, to reflect an increase in the number of commissioned surgical providers following a national procurement in 2019. NHS England and NHS Improvement are funding fellowships for surgeons to train in gender reassignment surgery. The first fellowship started in May at Imperial College. The contract for phalloplasty services is currently out to tender with view for rapid award.

**Members: Correspondence****Justin Madders:**[\[21250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to correspondence dated 27 April 2021 from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston on the impact of unit of dental activity targets.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 1 July 2021.

**Travel: Coronavirus****Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[23163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had discussions with counterparts in the Department for Transport on permitting the use of NHS lateral flow tests for mandatory covid-19 testing for arrivals into the UK from (i) amber and (ii) green list destinations.

**Jo Churchill:**

Officials in the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Transport have discussed options for reducing the cost of travel testing, including whether National Health Service lateral flow tests could be used by arrivals from 'amber' and 'green list' countries. However, lateral flow tests are not permitted for most international arrivals as they are not suitable for identifying variants. Polymerase chain reaction testing of inbound travellers and genome sequencing of positive samples are crucial for disease surveillance and identification of potentially harmful variants.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Au Pairs: EU Nationals****Daisy Cooper:**[\[10664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to bring forward proposals to enable au pairs from the EU to live and work in the UK via the youth mobility visa scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

As has been the case since 2008, successive governments have decided the UK's immigration system will not offer a dedicated visa route for au pairs. Au pairs are typically young, far from home and reliant upon their host family for accommodation and living costs, consequently a visa which is linked to one type of employment or employer and restricts their ability to seek work more generally may render them vulnerable to exploitation.

While we have not commenced formal discussions with any EU Member State, we remain open to negotiating Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) arrangements with other countries but they must be reciprocal as the YMS is not simply a one way route to recruiting cheap labour overseas.

Those who have employed an au pair can either look to offer a package which makes it attractive to those arriving in the UK with general rights to work or use the wide range of childcare options in the UK relied upon by most families.

■ **Child Rearing****Siobhan Baillie:**[\[21361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to include parental alienation in the statutory guidance of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

**Victoria Atkins:**

For the first time in history there is in statute a wide-ranging definition of domestic abuse which incorporates a range of abuses beyond physical violence, including emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour, and economic abuse.

The Home Secretary is to issue statutory guidance on domestic abuse, under section 84 of the Domestic Abuse Act to support the implementation of the definition of domestic abuse introduced by the Act.

The guidance aims to provide information to help with recognising abuse and how it may impact different victims. This includes children, who are for the first time recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. In addition, it seeks to provide support to frontline professionals, signpost other sources of guidance, useful resources and tools. A finalised version of the guidance is not yet available, the Home Secretary is required under the legislation to undertake consultation ahead of finalising the guidance and before it may be issued, details of this will follow in due

course. A draft of the guidance was published during the passage of the Bill, and is available for reference:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/896640/Draft\\_statutory\\_guidance\\_July\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896640/Draft_statutory_guidance_July_2020.pdf)

## ■ Domestic Abuse and Rape: Victims

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[20577]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to ensure that the victims of rape or domestic abuse can report crimes without the fear of having their children removed from their care.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Rape and domestic abuse are devastating crimes and it is essential that victims have the confidence to report to the police and receive the support they need for themselves and their children.

To this end, in 2021-22 the Government is providing approximately £151 million to victim and witness support services, which includes an extra £51 million to increase support for rape and domestic abuse victims. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is additionally providing £125 million to provide victims of domestic abuse, including their children, support within safe accommodation.

We understand the adverse impact experiencing domestic abuse can have on children. That is why the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises children as victims of domestic abuse where they see, hear, or experience its effects. The Home Office has also provided £3 million in the past year to services providing emotional and therapeutic support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

One of the key principles of the legislation which underpins the UK's child protection system is that children are best looked after within their families and that families should be supported to help keep them together. As a last resort, local authorities can apply to the courts for a care or supervision order where the child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm. In making their decisions, the courts must be satisfied that the threshold for significant harm has been met and that taking the child from his or her family's care will be in the child's best interests.

We are also continuing to deliver commitments made in response to the Ministry of Justice's Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts report.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Prosecutions

**Yvette Cooper:**

**[23064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of domestic abuse cases that have not been prosecuted as a result of the six-month time limit for common assault as a summary-only offence having elapsed in each year since 2015.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office collects data on domestic abuse related offences, and on the outcomes on offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Data is not available for all forces but the proportion of domestic abuse flagged offences that have the outcome OC17: Prosecution time limit expired is published for selected forces who provide data to HO.

2018/19 and 2019/20 - [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system – Appendix tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) , Table 3

2015/16 - 2017/18 - [Domestic abuse in England and Wales - Appendix tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) , Table 19

We are aware that there is a concern that some victims of domestic abuse may be losing access to justice since by the time they come forward with allegations of assault, the time limit for prosecution of such cases is up. We are gathering data about such incidents and if analysis suggests that action is needed, we will seek to address it as appropriate.

**■ Financial Services: Fraud****Sarah Olney:****[23292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a centralised reporting function for enhanced data sharing to help prevent scams relating to financial services.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* Action Fraud is the national reporting centre for fraud and also for cyber crime. They also take information reports on attempted frauds. Reports received by Action Fraud are considered by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), both of which are operated by the City of London Police, which is the UK's lead force for fraud.

Data matching allows reports from different parts of the country to be linked through analysis, identifying the criminals behind the frauds. Reports are sent to local police forces and law enforcement agencies for investigation, and bank accounts, websites and phone numbers used by fraudsters can be taken down.

A benefit of having a centralised reporting system is trends can be identified and action taken to address these threats, including scams relating to financial services. Not every report results in an investigation, but every report helps to build a clearer picture of the threat. This contributes to making the UK a more hostile place for fraudsters to operate in and helps to keep other potential victims safe.

For these reasons, it remains extremely important the public reports fraud whenever they experience it. Action Fraud can be contacted by phone on 0300 123 2040 or on their website, currently available at:

[http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud).



Regulation also plays an important part in reducing the risk of fraud to consumers. As part of the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) responsibility to ensure the integrity of UK financial markets, the FCA requires all authorised firms to have systems and controls in place to mitigate the risk of them being used to commit financial crime. Whilst the police have primary responsibility for investigating fraud, the FCA has powers to take a variety of enforcement action against firms which carry out fraudulent activity. The Treasury continues to keep the legislative framework under review to ensure it is effective in reducing the risk of fraud.

## ■ Fraud: Crime Prevention

**Sarah Olney:**

**[23291]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help provide consumers with the (a) knowledge and (b) tools to protect themselves against scammers.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* Fraudsters are sophisticated and will exploit any vulnerabilities they can, especially as more of us find ourselves at home and online.

The Government recognises the serious risks presented by scams and fraud and the huge financial and emotional impact they can have on victims. We are working collaboratively with law enforcement and the private sector to reaffirm messages to consumers setting out how they can protect themselves from fraud and scams.

We know one of the best ways to deal with these crimes is for consumers to be well-informed on how to protect themselves. That is why we published guidance on how to spot potential frauds and the steps to take to avoid them. This advice can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>.

Alongside this, consumers can also keep abreast of scam and fraud trends through alerts provided by Action Fraud, the national reporting service for fraud and cybercrime, via their website: [www.actionfraud.police.uk/news](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/news) and through the ScamSmart campaign run by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Further details can be found at:

<https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart>.

We have also been working closely alongside the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) who launched their Suspicious Email Reporting Service last year. This system has proved an instant success with the public, with over 6.1 million reports received and the removal of over 45,000 scams and 90,000 websites taken down since its inception in April 2020.

We are encouraging the public to forward suspicious emails to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) and to forward suspicious text messages to 7726 (which is

free of charge). Any reports of fraud should be made to Action Fraud who can be contacted by phone on 0300 123 2040 or through their website:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime>.

## ■ Glass: Manufacturing Industries

**Hilary Benn:** [23055]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the availability of specialist refractory brick layers in the UK.

**Hilary Benn:** [23056]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that UK glass manufacturers are able to access specialist refractory brick layers from outside the UK after 1 July 2021 to work on short-term maintenance and furnace re-build projects.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* The job of a refractory engineer, under Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code 5312 (bricklayers and masons) on the eligible occupations list, meets the RQF3 skills threshold for the Skilled Worker route so it is eligible to be sponsored for a Skilled Worker visa, subject to the other criteria under the Route being met.

There is no minimum length of sponsorship and those sponsored for less than 6 months do not need to pay the Immigration Skills Charge or the Immigration Health Surcharge.

Queries about the availability of labour in the UK Labour Market and recruitment issues for businesses should be directed to the Department for Work and Pensions.

## ■ Hezbollah

**Stephen Morgan:** [22014]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information the Government holds on the number of Hezbollah (a) members and (b) supporters in the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government does not comment on intelligence matters.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [23107]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of fully proscribing Hezbollah in 2019.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [23108]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has taken steps to use the expanded law enforcement authority following Hezbollah's proscription.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[23109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any secondary or corollary designations have been made since Hezbollah was fully proscribed.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[23110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of Hezbollah's Foreign Relations Department since its full proscription.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* The Government assesses proscription is a powerful tool within the counter-terrorism toolkit. In addition to the criminal offences associated with proscription, the tool can have a powerful impact on behaviour and disincentivise people from becoming members or supporters of a proscribed organisation, as well as supporting other forms of disruptive activity, including asset freezing and the take down of online content.

Since the extension of Hizballah's proscription in 2019, the Government has also extended the UK's domestic asset freeze to cover the group in its entirety.

Investigations into the activities of proscribed organisations, or individuals who may be members or supporters of proscribed organisations, are an operational matter for the police and intelligence agencies. It would not be appropriate to publish data on intelligence related matters.

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters, including whether groups are, or are not, being considered for proscription.

## ■ Immigration Controls: Airports

**Jim Shannon:** [\[21905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to increase the number of Border Force staff at airports, to tackle queues at immigration and customs checks.

**Kevin Foster:**

Protecting public health is our priority and as we reopen international travel safely we will maintain 100% health checks at the border to protect the wider public as well as our vaccine rollout. However, with additional checks to keep the country safe, some delays are to be expected.

Following two rounds of recruitment the Border Force has increased its workforce to an operational team of just over 9,000 staff, with a large proportion of those staff deployed in Border Force Operations.

In addition to permanent FTE, Border Force has established a dedicated internal operation to ensure additional contingency resources are available to deploy to the primary control point to process entry requirements. This is aiming to bring in over

800 staff. These are made up of full-time surge resources, but also part time seasonal, and agency staff.

In addition, we are updating our e-gates to meet the new biosecurity check requirements as well as simplifying the Passenger Locator Form to expedite the process as much as possible.

Resource and staffing requirements at every port are continually reviewed by Border Force who work closely with airport operators to ensure resources are deployed flexibly as and when they are required, however, increased passenger flow will add to wait times due to our enhanced checks, and those travelling should be aware of this and plan for it.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Apsana Begum:** [\[22035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to introduce a mobile application to simplify the process for EU citizens proving their status when travelling into the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

Individuals who have been granted digital status are not required to provide evidence of this to cross the border. Provided the individual travels using a document they either used to apply or have added to their UKVI account, their status will be automatically recognised at the border.

Where an individual travels using a document not known to the Home Office, they may be asked further questions or further manual systems checks may be conducted at the primary control point in order to verify their status.

Beyond this, and as part of our efforts towards becoming a world-leading immigration system beyond 2022 we will aim to deliver a fully end-to-end digital experience for those arriving at the UK border. We will also ensure support is available for those unable to use online services or who may otherwise be digitally excluded

**Apsana Begum:** [\[22036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department considers reasonable grounds for EU citizens to be accepted for settled or pre settled status in the UK if they miss the 30 June 2021 application deadline.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has already published non-exhaustive guidance (on 1 April 2021) on what may constitute such reasonable grounds, which will underpin a flexible and pragmatic approach to considering late applications under the scheme in light of the circumstances of each case.

The guidance can be found at pages 26 to 44 here:

[EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/eu-settlement-scheme-guidance)

**Stephen Farry:** [22046]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an unemployed EU citizen who misses the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) 30 June 2021 deadline and subsequently makes a late application will have the right to take up new employment, while they wait for a decision on their EUSS application.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

EEA citizens who make a late application to the EU Settlement Scheme and do not have any other form of immigration leave will not be permitted to take up new employment until they have been granted status under the Scheme.

However, a person granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme on the basis of a late application will have the same rights from the date they are granted status, as a person who applied by the deadline. This includes the right to work.

**Stephen Farry:** [22047]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme, resident in Northern Ireland have had their applications deferred due to unresolved criminal proceedings.

**Stephen Farry:** [22049]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people residing in Northern Ireland who have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme but had their application deferred as a result of unresolved criminal proceedings have been waiting for more than (a) six months, (b) nine months, (c) one year and (d) eighteen months.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

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

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

Any EUSS application is likely to take longer to process if:

- we need to request more information from an applicant
- the applicant is applying as a minor and their application is not linked to an adult
- the applicant submits a paper based application
- the applicant may potentially have a relevant criminal record

- the applicant is applying to the scheme on the basis of a relationship which has not relied upon before in any previous application to the Home Office

In these instances, processing times will vary on a case-by-case basis, based upon how quickly an applicant can provide the requested information, and the circumstances and/or individual needs of each applicant

**Stephen Farry:**

**[22048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the EU Settlement Scheme submitted by or on behalf of a child resident in Northern Ireland have been deferred due to unresolved criminal proceedings in relation to (a) the child or (b) a joint applicant applying on behalf of the child.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

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

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

Any EUSS application is likely to take longer to process if:

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In these instances, processing times will vary on a case-by-case basis, based upon how quickly an applicant can provide the requested information, and the circumstances and/or individual needs of each applicant.

**Stephen Farry:**

**[22050]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether applications to the EU Settlement Scheme are deferred where the resolution of pending criminal proceedings against the applicant would not meet the grounds for refusal relating to suitability considerations.

**Kevin Foster:**

Decisions on EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications where the applicant is subject to pending criminal proceedings are deferred where those proceedings could lead to a conviction and subsequent refusal on suitability grounds; and where the

application does not otherwise meet the criteria for referral to Immigration Enforcement in respect of any other conviction.

We have recently revised the EUSS suitability guidance to allow an EUSS application which has been paused for at least six months, to be progressed where all of the following conditions are met:

- there is only one pending prosecution;
- the maximum potential sentence upon conviction is less than 12 months, according to the maximum category 1 sentence in line with the Sentencing Council guidelines for the alleged offence; and
- there are no previous convictions.

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[22051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to confirm that applications to the EU Settlement Scheme made by 31 December 2020, in respect of which consideration of a criminal record or criminal proceedings is relevant, will have their conduct assessed at the higher threshold of suitability applicable at that time based on EU law grounds of public policy, public security or public health for relevant conduct that occurred prior to 11pm on 31 December 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

Where an EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applicant's criminality is a relevant consideration, their conduct will be assessed against the threshold relevant to the period in which the conduct was committed.

Conduct committed before the end of the transition period (11pm on 31 December 2020) will be assessed against the EU law public policy, public security or public health test.

Conduct committed after the end of the transition period will be assessed against the UK's criminality threshold.

This is irrespective of the date on which the application was submitted to the EUSS.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Planning: York

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[21968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has had discussions with representatives of City of York Council on its decision to abolish the post of Chief Planning Officer.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[22177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of every planning authority having a Chief Planning Officer.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Local authorities are independent employers, responsible for the management and organisation of their own workforces. They are best placed to understand local priorities and to make resourcing decisions accordingly, including decisions about whether they should have a chief planning officer. However, town planners and other qualified professionals, who set policy and advise on decisions regarding the built and natural environments, play a key role in delivering a strong and effective planning service. The inputs will be even more vital to tackle today's and tomorrow's opportunities and challenges, including delivering more, well designed and sustainable homes and neighbourhoods and enhanced natural environments. There have been no discussions between my Department and the City of York Council on this issue.

**JUSTICE**■ **Children: Maintenance**

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [\[21173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Maintenance Enforcement Business Centre will have a system in place to receive overseas maintenance payments through the Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders from New Zealand.

**Chris Philp:**

The UK reciprocates with New Zealand under the 1956 New York Convention, the UN Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance. Payments are already received and processed by the HMCTS Maintenance Enforcement Business Centre under this treaty. The payment processing method is currently being updated.

■ **Civil Partnerships: Impact Assessments**

**Cat Smith:** [\[21943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the equality impact assessment his Department carried out for enabling outdoor civil marriages.

**Alex Chalk:**

On 30 June, a time limited statutory instrument was laid to amend the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005. This follows a commitment made in 2019 to accelerate plans to allow civil weddings and civil partnerships to be held outside through secondary legislation. The change took effect on 1 July and gives more options to couples and the sector in terms of how civil weddings and civil partnerships are celebrated by allowing all aspects of the ceremony to take place outdoors, within the boundary of the land of which the built premises form part. The proposed location for the outdoor proceedings must be assessed to be seemly and dignified.



This change provides greater flexibility especially during the pandemic when there are important public health considerations to take into account. This is not radical reform and ultimately it does not change the current law's focus on premises.

These are time-limited amendments to the regulations which came into force on 1 July 2021 and will expire at the end of 5th April 2022. A consultation will be undertaken in the Autumn 2021 to consider the practical impacts of this policy in detail and to enable a later amending Statutory Instrument which is not time limited. A full impact assessment and equality impact assessment will be undertaken on completion of the consultation and will be published in due course.

Amending the 2005 Regulations will benefit many thousands of couples who seek a civil marriage or civil partnership formation on approved premises. The power to make provision in regulations for approved premises is set out in statute and extends only to civil marriage and civil partnership formation. In bringing in these time-limited changes to civil weddings and civil partnerships on Approved Premises, I am content that the department has met its Public Sector Equality Duty.

## ■ Computers: Common Law

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[21220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to review the common law presumption of the reliability of computers.

**Chris Philp:**

I refer the Honourable member to the answers given to PQ 69550 on 9 July 2020 and PQ 72206 on 20 July 2020 on this subject. We have no plans to review the presumption, as it has wide application and is rebuttable if there is evidence to the contrary.

Nonetheless, Government wants to be fully assured that there is a public summary of the failings associated with Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system and that lessons are learnt from this dispute. That is why the Inquiry into the Post Office Horizon IT dispute has been converted into a statutory enquiry with effect from 1 June 2021, with new powers to require the production of evidence and documents. The full, updated Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are available on the [Post Office Horizon IT inquiry 2020 ToR](#) page, and on gov.uk.

## ■ Deed Poll

**Apsana Begum:** [\[22037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to remove the requirement for the administration of an oath for an application for an enrolled deed poll.

**Chris Philp:**

The Regulations for the enrolled deed poll process (to change names) are made by the Master of the Rolls. At his request a Judicial Working Group is reviewing the existing Regulations and making recommendations for a number of reforms to modernise the process.

My understanding is that the group has been looking into a suggestion of replacing the current requirement for administration of an oath with the applicant being required to complete a statement of truth as part of their application, verifying the accuracy of the information provided. Recommendations for reform are due to be considered by the Master of the Rolls in the next few months.

## ■ Marriage: Humanism

**Clive Lewis:** [\[21977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance his Department has made available for people who (a) want to have a legally recognised humanist marriage and (b) must also have a civil marriage to gain legal recognition but are unable to do so as a result of the challenges of registrar availability in some parts of country following the covid-19 outbreak.

**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 in light of the Law Commission's recommendations.

Delivery of registration services falls to local authorities who continue to manage the demand for civil marriage within their respective geographical areas during recovery from the pandemic

## ■ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[21973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the need for (a) private tutors and (b) music tutors to be included in clause 45 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[21974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the need for host families of international students being included in clause 45 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

**Chris Philp:**

I recognise that there are concerns about those who might abuse their position of power over a 16 or 17-year-old to pressure them into engaging in a sexual relationship. We want to ensure that existing offences are being used effectively to tackle this behaviour, and that those working with young people understand their responsibilities and act appropriately.

It is against that background that my department, working closely with colleagues across government, took forward a review of the existing law, to check that it is working effectively and to ensure young people are protected, whilst preserving the sexual rights and freedoms granted by Parliament to those aged 16 or over.

That review, which engaged with stakeholders working with young people in a range of fields, found strong evidence for extending protection to include within the law those individuals who hold influence or authority over a child, including 16 and 17 year olds, by virtue of their roles and the activities which they undertake within a sports or a religious setting.

We have therefore included provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to extend the existing offences to these settings in this carefully targeted manner. Provision has also been made in the Bill to enable further Positions of Trust to be created by the Secretary of State in the future by way of secondary legislation should there be evidence of a need to do this in other fields.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Electoral Register: Northern Ireland

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[23390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the refresh of the electoral register from 1 July 2021, what contingencies are in place to facilitate any elections that may occur over the next few months.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The conduct of both elections and canvass are operational matters for the Chief Electoral Officer who has confirmed to the Secretary State for Northern Ireland that if required her office could conduct an election during the canvass period.

The Chief Electoral Officer is under a statutory duty to hold canvass this year following a one year postponement due to the pandemic.

### ■ Northern Ireland Government

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[23335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he last met the First Minister of Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State holds weekly discussions with the First Minister of Northern Ireland.

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[23336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he last met the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State holds weekly discussions with the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Aviation: Coronavirus

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[23191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with airline staff to help ensure that covid-19 safety regulations are being (a) followed and (b) enforced.

**Robert Courts:**

The government expects all airlines to manage the risks of COVID-19 transmission and have issued detailed guidance on the processes and checks airline staff need to carry out to keep the public safe.

The Department regularly undertakes engagement with the aviation sector, at all levels, in relation to their obligations under Covid-19 regulations when conveying passengers to and from our borders. The Department flags where compliance is unacceptable and works with other agencies and departments to address this with industry.

### ■ EU Internal Trade: Holyhead Port

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[23086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussion he has had with her Welsh counterpart on improving the competitiveness of Holyhead port for EU transit traffic relative to European mainland ports.

**Robert Courts:**

The Port of Holyhead, and utilisation of the 'land bridge', remains a competitive option for freight traffic to and from Ireland and the European mainland and is a preference for many freight operations. The land bridge route has significant advantages for hauliers over maritime routes and I am confident that Welsh ports will continue to thrive as we build on the opportunities provided by being an independent trading nation.

### ■ Great British Railways

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[21323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether operator names such as LNER and GWR will be permitted under the establishment of Great British Railways.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Great British Railways will be a single, familiar brand with accountable leadership, responsible for delivering better value and flexible fares, alongside the punctual and reliable services passengers deserve. A coherent, consistent and clearly branded railway network will give passengers confidence in using it. Great British Railways will use updated versions of the classic 'double arrow' logo, which remains the most widely recognised symbol of the railway in this country. Variants to the national brand will be developed to reflect the English regions, Scotland and Wales, while emphasising that the railway is one network serving the whole of Great Britain and so it is entirely feasible that the names the Hon Gentleman refers to will continue to figure on our railways.

**Level Crossings: Doncaster****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[21322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the incident at Rossington Level Crossing in Doncaster on 13 June 2021, what steps he plans to take to prevent similar incidents at level crossings in the future.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Network Rail have operational responsibility for rail infrastructure, including level crossings. These are risk assessed and appropriate protective measures put in place to ensure the safety of the travelling public and users. It appears that the incident at Rossington was caused by a stolen car crashing through the fence next to the level crossing. The level crossing and the fence had been identified as suitable protection by a risk assessment undertaken by Network Rail. The investigation into the incident is for the British Transport Police, who are currently investigating.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[22000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has received briefing on the collision of a car and an LNER Azuma at Rossington Level Crossing in Doncaster on 13 June 2021.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The investigation into the incident is being undertaken by the British Transport Police. I have been kept informed appropriately.

**Railways: Contracts****John Penrose:**[\[21853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of whether the number of commissioned service contracts in place under the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail be the same as the number of rail franchises operated under the previous system.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

It will be for Great British Railways to determine the number of Passenger Service Contracts let. The geographic and financial size of Passenger Service Contracts will

reflect local markets and needs. Great British Railways will need to take account of the full range of operational, commercial and economic factors in making these decisions.

### ■ Railways: Season Tickets

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[22003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the ability of passengers to customise their flexible season tickets.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The flexible season ticket is a national product, priced to provide better value and convenience for commuters travelling two to three days a week.

For most 2 and 3 day a week commuters, the flexible season ticket will offer savings against buying daily tickets or traditional seasons, provided that they are following this commuting pattern.

For those with different commuting patterns, existing tickets such as traditional seasons or dailies may be the best choice.

Commuters should always consider which product best suits their journey and travel pattern. This is easier than ever with the updated season ticket calculator.

### ■ Rolling Stock: Coronavirus

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[21998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 8 June 2020 to Question 49664, how the rolling stock companies agreed to support the industry and the country during the covid-19 pandemic; and what assessment he has made of the effect on the public of that support.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the rolling stock companies have supported the rail industry in a number of ways. They have continued and in some cases accelerated maintenance work for the supply chain. They have ensured prompt payment and in some cases have made advance payments to support the supply chain. They have continued to provide very substantial investment to refurbish fleets, invest in decarbonisation and innovation to benefit both passengers and the wider public. We have seen continued development of low-carbon initiatives such as Porterbrook's hydrogen-powered HYDROFlex train, Eversholt's SWIFT express freight train as well as interior refurbishment of the West Coast Pendolino fleet by Angel Trains.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Leasing

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[21997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the predicted total cost to the public purse of payments to the rolling stock leasing companies for (a) 2020, (b) 2021, (c) 2022 and (d) 2023.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Office of Rail and Road publishes annual statistics on rail industry finances here:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/finance/rail-industry-finance/>

These statistics show that total rolling stock costs paid by those operators under franchise contract with the Department for Transport were £2.534bn in 2019/20.

However, please note that:

During 2019/20 these costs were not borne directly by the public purse as the train operators were classified to the private sector in that year. They were reclassified to the public sector with effect from 1 April 2020, as a consequence of the emergency agreements introduced at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rolling stock costs include not only unit rentals, but also a range of support services such as train maintenance and stabling, not all of which are provided by the lessor of the train fleet. No estimates are available for later years.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Procurement

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[21996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Office of Rail and Road will be tasked with ensuring that costs in the procurement of rolling stock will be controlled; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Office for Rail and Road is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the remedies put in place by the Competition Commission in 2009 in respect of the passenger rolling stock market. This includes a package of remedies that ensures effective competition in the rolling stock market which the ORR is responsible for monitoring.

## ■ Shipping: Training

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[24106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the international competitiveness of UK seafarer training.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department for Transport have established a Maritime Skills Commission (MSC) to lead the sector's work in ensuring the maritime sector has a pipeline of talented people to serve all parts of the sector. The Commission has recently completed and published a review of seafarer cadet training. Working with stakeholders the MSC

and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency will look at taking forward these recommendations.

Refreshing the seafarer training system in the UK will allow the well-regarded UK maritime training sector to strengthen its position internationally and meet the future skills needs of the sector.

### ■ South Western Railway: Railway Signals

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[21321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost to the public purse was of the disruption on the South Western Railway network on 11 June 2021 as a result of multiple signal failures in the Surbiton area.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The cost to the public purse is estimated to be £200,000 due to both loss in revenue and delay repay costs for South Western Railway (SWR). Network Rail will also have incurred further costs. The Department has asked Network Rail to provide details of its incident learning review and has asked SWR to provide details of its customer response and communications.

### ■ Travel: Coronavirus

**Julian Sturdy:** [\[23175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what percentage of 2019 outbound travel passenger flows do destinations on the covid-19 green list represent.

**Robert Courts:**

Data collected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) shows that countries and territories which are currently on the green list accounted for 7% of departing international air passengers on direct flights handled at UK airports in 2019.

There were no direct sea or international rail passenger services in 2019 between the UK and countries or territories that are currently on the green list.

This analysis is based on countries and territories on the green list for COVID-19 as of 04:00 hours on Wednesday 30 June 2021.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud

**Lee Anderson:** [\[21337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to reduce benefit fraud and deter those seeking to abuse the system.



**Will Quince:**

The Department has taken huge steps to reduce and minimise fraud and error during the last 16 months – at a time where the Department processed 4.3 million new Universal Credit claims, with the vast majority of benefits paid remaining genuine.

Without the interventions we introduced, the overall Fraud and Error rate would have been notably higher.

Our Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service coordinates the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19. In May 2020, cyber colleagues prevented a large attack on our systems by organised criminals. This prevented substantial sums being paid out to scammers.

We continue to invest in our digital capability and organisational design, with the Chancellor announcing £44m at the Spring Budget for the development of this prevent approach. This funding has enabled us to expand our Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service, develop pre-payment 'risking' techniques and maintain our new Enhanced Checking Service for high risk claims.

We are currently revisiting any high risks claims that were paid during the early period of COVID-19.

We take any abuse of taxpayers' money very seriously. Where fraud does occur, we will investigate it and where fraud is established, we are committed to the use of appropriate penalties and to recovering monies from the perpetrators.

We also continue to work with Other Government Departments and Law Enforcement Agencies nationally and across borders to ensure appropriate intelligence and resources are shared, enabling the totality of any criminality to be identified and investigated.